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Out from the blasting drifts that swept unceasingly along the highway, there suddenly crept a diminutive figure, with head and body covered by an old plaid shawl, white with congelated snow.—PAGE 91.

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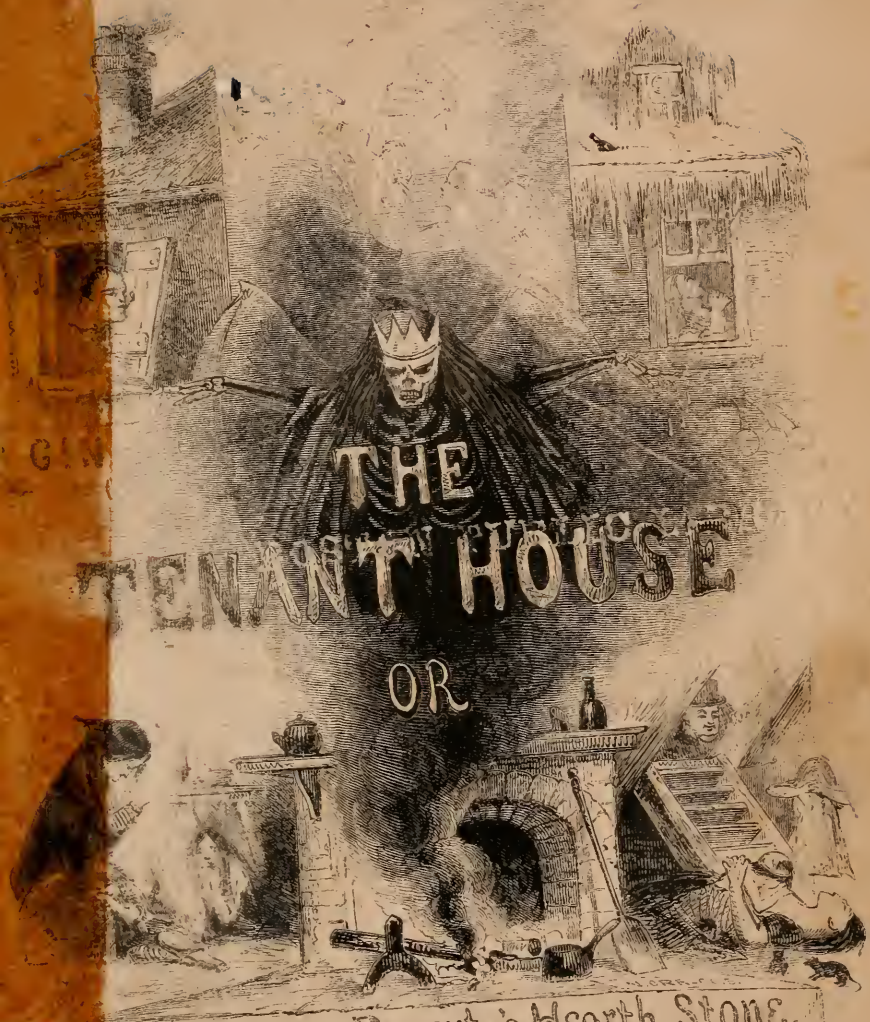

THE TENANT HOUSE OR

Embers from Poverty's Hearth Stone.

ROBERT M. DE WITT, PUBLISHER,

160 & 162 Nassau Street.

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THE

TENANT-HOUSE;

OR,

1446.25

Embers from

POVERTY'S HEARTHSTONE.

Hagenne, Augustine Joseph Hickey J

CENTRAL LIB.

"And ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning."

Amos iv. 2.

NEW YORK:

ROBERT M. DE WITT, PUBLISHER,

160 & 162 NASSAU STREET.

[1852]

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
The Thread of Life and Death,	9
Footprints, and Where they Led,	16
The Giant and the Dwarfs,	20
Kolephat College,	28
The Weasel and Samson,	48
Tenants of Foley's Barracks,	58
Mallory the Miser,	77
The Brown-Haired Boy,	95
Noon at the Death-Bed,	107
Mr. Jobson's Visitors,	117
A Family Council,	128
The Neglected Wife,	135

PAGE

Margery and the Miser, ... 150

The Hebrew's Daughter, ... 159

"An Old Acquaintance," 170

The Rag-Picker's Revelation, ... 182

The Yellow Dwarf, ... 189

The Adopted Sisters, ... 203

Margery's Sabbath School, ... 217

Kolephat and Ferret, ... 239

A Street Battle, ... 248

Sabbath Night at Mr. Granby's, ... 259

The Beer-House and its Guests, ... 267

Walter's Book, ... 283

A Day in the Orphan's Life, ... 301

Peleg Ferret's Monday, ... 322

The Inventor's Wife, ... 347

The Ruined Gamester, ... 356

Scenes in Kolephat College, ... 368

The Catholic Child, ... 387

The Tempter, ... 399

The Garroters, ... 412

PAGE

The Dying Gamester, ... 420

The Poison-Phial, ... 431

The God-mother's Home, ... 439

The Fiery Trial, ... 459

Unravelment, ... 480

TO

HUMAN HEARTS AND CHRISTIAN SOULS,

The author dedicates theſe pages; not the product of fancy, but baſed upon facts of real life. He deſires that they shall be peruſed by the virtuous and thoughtful, and truſts that, as chronicles of the poor, they will intereſt the sympathies of the opulent. That they may have some little influence in directing attention to the terrible evils that exiſt in our communities—the sad social anomalies that ſtartle the political economiſt, and grieve the philanthropiſt —is the earneſt prayer of one who has gone down into the moral wilderneſs of our over-crowded population, and witneſſed the ſtruggle of Good againſt Evil. With the legiſlator, the capitaliſt, and the friend of our fellow-creatures, he will thereafter leave the "Tenant House."

THE

TENANT-HOUSE.

Prologue.

The Thread of Life and Death.

WHEN a stranger, under guidance and protection of police, or a home missionary, fearlessly breaking bread with outcasts, penetrates some gloomy court or narrow alley in the great Christian city of New York, he beholds destitution and squalor of most repulsive feature: he discovers tottering buildings crowded with sickly and depraved human beings; stalwart, malign-looking men, glancing furtively at every passer-by; brazen-browed women, with foul words upon their reeking lips; children of impure thoughts and actions, leering with wicked precocity. When he enters the wretched abiding-places of these unhappy people, he may find, amid associations of vice and uncleanness, many suffering and patient souls

bearing earthly martyrdom with serene trust in their Heavenly Father, and plucking, even out of their "ugly and venomous" adversity, the "jewel" of immortal peace. Such struggling ones do not dwell long in the darkness and dolor of their probation; for the celestial ladders, let down from Mercy's throne, rest quite as often upon the black pavement of a tenant-court as amid the flowers that tesselate a palace garden; and up, unceasingly, on the shining rounds, glide disenthralled spirits of the poor and lowly watchers for their Lord.

There were many strange occupants in the old houses which formed the row called "Foley's Barracks," fronting on a street in the eastern quarter of the city. Six buildings were joined, side by side, to form this row, and on the ground floor of every building were four rooms. Through each building ran a passage-way, four feet in width, and on either side of this passage-way doors opened into the four rooms. Every building was five stories in height, and each floor was a duplicate in plan of the one below or above. Through the six buildings ran the six passage-ways to a rear court, or well, of twelve feet in width, separating the six front buildings from six similar ones in the rear. In the front row of "Foley's Barracks" were twenty-four apartments on a floor, and in the rear twenty-four upon a floor, and in both buildings were ten floors; consequently, there were four hundred and eighty apartments in the two rows, and one-half of these were closets without light or air, in which the tenants of Foley's Barracks were supposed to sleep—to the number, proba-

bly, of one thousand persons—men and women, and children of every age.

It may well be supposed, then, that a variety of people dwelt in such a population; some whose methods of life were questionable or precarious, or altogether bad; others who toiled incessantly, and more who idled time, and begged their scanty means of subsistence. It is plain, also, that hundreds of little children must dwell in such a crowded locality; children, with voices varying from a babe's thin treble to the changing tones of adolescence.

It would be curious to speculate as to places, and society, and habits, whence each family had emerged long since, before its members became tenants of Foley's Barracks. What strange life-histories would be thereby unveiled!—what changes of fortune!—what fearful alternations of mortal suffering! But it is only one Historian who readeth unerringly the intricate secrets involved in the existence of His humblest subjects. Suffice it that no leaf is blotted, no recorded word erased, of all the multitudinous chronicles of the lowliest poor!

Nevertheless, dear Human Heart that beatest tenderly for thy kind, we will go together—thou and I—to the pavement of Foley's Barracks, and descend to its damp and noisome cellars, where, as in dim rooms above, the likenesses of their Maker dwell in dens unfit for brutes. Go down those broken steps, where the green mould collects in every crevice, and pass into a dark, cold vault, with water submerging its rotten flooring. Step with care, now; treading from brick to brick of a row placed on their edges, to form a sort of causeway from the cellar

entrance to an arch in the rear, where lies a straw bed, spread upon two thin boards which are raised by bricks above the water's level. Close your eyes one moment, that the darkness may be less when you look again, and then glance toward the straw bed.

But your ears have already caught the cry of a new-born child; another soul ushered into the world upon that bed of straw, in a cellar submerged with water. You advance, and your vision, a little more accustomed to the obscurity, discovers that the new-born babe clings to the breast of a dead mother! The woman died last night of cholera. Turning to the right, you will see two other corpses—that of a husband and son of the orphan babe's mother. Presently the policeman will arrive and discover the dead, and bear away the infant—sole remnant of a family of paupers.

You have seen enough! No? Follow me, then, out of the death-vault, to the warm air of a summer's twilight. Before us a servant girl, in holiday attire, is leading by the hand a toddling child, just essaying its first steps. But you notice that the girl herself staggers, as if inebriated. It is true: she has been visiting a "gossip" in yonder tenant-house, and indulged in a glass of liquor which has overcome her. It is her mistress's babe that she drags along; a blue-eyed, angelic-looking infant, with golden ringlets clustering on its white neck; it is worshipped by its happy parents, and yet they intrusted its charge to the drunken nurse who now staggers with it through the streets, smouching its rich clothing with the dust in which

it trails. Observe her closer; she totters, and with nodding head, seats herself on yonder curb-stone, at the mouth of that dark alley at the side of the tenant-house. The weary babe ceases its cries, frightened at the nurse's strange demeanor; while she, poor wretch, endeavors vainly to recall her scattered senses. Presently, abandoning the effort, and swaying back and forth, she drops to sleep.

Now, behold, emerging from the black alley's mouth, a grotesque and sordid figure—that of an old woman, bent almost double, who carries a basket in one hand and a long iron-hooked staff in the other. It is old Pris, the Rag-Picker, whose evil eye is the terror of a superstitious neighborhood. She approaches the intoxicated servant girl, and stands grimly before her. The babe screams, but its nurse awakes not, and the ancient crone grins maliciously. Then, peering cautiously around, to be sure that no observer is near, she disengages the babe's hand from that of its unconscious nurse, and snatching the innocent to her withered arms, hobbles away, and disappears in the dark alley.

But the piercing screams of the child have aroused its wretched nurse, who starts wildly up, misses her charge, and, with a shriek, rushes wildly through the street, unknowing whither. When she has gone, the old Rag-Picker again creeps from the alley, with the babe in her arms, not clothed as before in garments of fine linen and velvet, but wrapped in a muddy and dingy blanket-rag, which already soils its pure skin and draggles its golden locks with the filth of the pavement. The hag leers about

her cautiously, and then depositing the child on the curb-stone, totters away with her hook and basket, gloating meanwhile, over the theft she has committed, and on the price which the pawnbroker will pay for an infant's costly garb.

Meanwhile the baby remains on the side-walk, while the evening shadows gather fast. The intoxicated nurse has fled away, half frantic. Presently, a policeman or other passer-by will discover the foundling, and bear it away.

Here, now, O Human Heart! are two babes; one born of a dying mother, on the straw of the submerged cellar; the other suckled amid luxury and refinement, and idolized by its doting parents; both now naked, abandoned, exposed to famine—waifs on the world's great stream.

Expound me now the problem: whither go the pair? who shall unravel me the thread of the rich offspring and the thread of the poor offspring? O Human Heart! let us watch and wait.

Nay? thou wouldst go farther? Follow me, then, away from the vicinity of Foley's Barracks—away from the crowded Tenant-House—through narrow and ill-lighted streets, till we emerge upon the thoroughfares of business, and thence to the Avenues, where long rows of princely mansions, with gardens and conservatories, lofty ceilings, and broad casements, permit the balmy evening air to penetrate every room, and disperse an aroma of luxury in keeping with the magnificence that reigns

throughout. As we saunter towards this elegant locality, we look up to the heavens and behold a fleecy cloud, tinged with the purple hues of sunset. When we left Foley's Barracks, that cloud rested directly above the cellar wherein lay the victims of cholera : it has traversed the sky, following us, and now, as the last sunbeam disappears in the west, it pauses, darkly over-shadowing an Avenue-palace, ready to descend with the night-damps, and enter the gilded chambers.

Nay ! it has already entered ; for, as we pass over the marble threshold, we encounter pallid faces. and eyes swollen with watching and tears. A beautiful child lies cold on its little bier, and the mother is dying upon pillows of lace, while the stricken master of the house bows his head, and will not be comforted.

O Human Heart ! that fleecy, purple-hued cloud arose from the exhalations of disease in the Tenant-House, and was wafted by summer zephyrs over squares and gardens, to descend, loaded with pestilence, upon the mansion of luxury and love. The cholera was born of the submerged hovel, and released unto the air, to destroy the life and beauty of a palace. Unravel me the thread so closely woven between the poor and the rich ; the babe and mother of the Avenue, and the babe and mother of Foley's Barracks ; and the pestilence uniting them in death.

Chapter I.

Footprints, and Where they led.

SNOW, falling in myriads of sharp particles, filling the air with white, cold fleeces, and hiding house-roofs and tree-tops, lintels of doors, awnings, and piles of building-materials, and all the great city-squares, under an icy covering.

Snow driving wildly around street corners, drifting over crossings, penetrating narrow alleys and cellar-openings, blown against walls, driven into nooks and crannies of piers and wharves, and only melting away in the black waters of the river.

Snow clinging to box-coats of stage drivers, accumulating on coach-tops and wheels, and about the fetlocks of horses, and upon harness, and beating against close carriage windows.

Snow thrashed into the faces of pedestrians, congealing in hair and beard, collecting on collars and in muffle-folds, and whirling in gusts around human feet hurrying homeward.

The winter's evening had set in with a violent storm of snow descending incessantly. People gathered in areas

and under shelter of porches, watching for slow-moving omnibuses to drag along, and dropping in, one by one, to the last vacant seat. Men and women, bundled in shawls and cloaks, their faces half hid in scarfs, plodded stubbornly forward, with bowed forms, breasting the ice-laden blasts. Lamp-lighters climbed iron posts, brightened their features a moment with jets of gas, and then obscured themselves in grey darkness beyond. Wheels ceased to sound upon the pave, dulled by clogging snow. Broad entrances to theatres, lit with many-colored lights, opened for play-goers, but few play-goers passed in. Even the green woollen doors of bar-rooms swung not often to admit a visitor.

Anon the shutters of stores were flung up clatteringly by shivering lads, locks were turned, and bolts made fast, and clerks hastened to lone chambers, and crept quickly to bed, hearing the sleet whirled fiercely against their window panes. A little later, the theatre fronts were darkened, and lights went out, one after another, behind the screens of bar-rooms; and at length the glazed doors of hotels were barred by grumbling porters, who then betook themselves to doze in arm-chairs; and at last, the wretched street-wantons, latest wanderers, crawled away to their sad habitations.

Then, to eyes that looked between parted curtains from some sick room, or to the night-watch, cowering under porches and peering outward through blinding mist, the streets grew white and desolate. Carriage ruts now became level, under multitudinous flakes of snow, and prints of human feet could no more be discerned upon the pave-

ment. Still the snow fell, drifted, and gathered silently, overspreading the great city with white loneliness.

Very solemnly, muffled by thick atmosphere, the tongues of church clocks told the hour of twelve, clanging to one another, as if complaining of the stormy midnight. The watchers, gazing from sick-rooms, listened a moment, counting the strokes, and then turned away, smoothing the curtain folds, and muttering "Who would be out in a night like this?" And the night-guardians shrunk back under shelter, haply murmuring, "God help the poor!"

Then it was that, to eyes which scanned closely those deserted walks wherever the dark snow clung so shroud-like, there might have been visible a line of footprints, going from the mouth of a dark alley, in a squalid quarter of the city, traversing narrow streets, up to the great Broadway thoroughfare, thence past the closed hotels and theatres, and entering at length the iron-gated, lonesome Park; not heavy boot-marks, tramping the pave with wide strides, but small, uneven tracks, as of a child's unsteady feet.

One, two, three—prints small as the span of my lady's fingers—five, six, seven, sinking in the snow; thus on: hundreds of little tracks through the silent streets, clouds of drift constantly obliterating the tiny traces of a baby's feet, toiling painfully through the storm of a December midnight. O, if sleeping mothers, in that hour folding the beloved in their arms, could dream of such infant footprints in the snow, how closely would the little ones be gathered to their trembling hearts! how tears would

steal from under drooped eyelashes, moistening the innocent cheeks that nestled closely to maternal lips.

One, two, three: little tracks inside the iron gates, around which sleet was whirling in sharp eddies; then along the drifted walks across to Nassau street, through snowy darkness, and down beside the walls of a lofty building whence lights shone out of high windows, and wherein crashed incessantly, like strokes of iron flails, the laboring machinery of steam-presses, printing news of all the world—bulletins of battles and elections, records of markets and stocks—but seldom or never a word concerning such trifles as I now write about—a child's footprints in the snow.

Chapter II.

The Giant and the Dwarfs.

IN cells under sidewalks, and caverns hollowed beneath city streets, a powerful and subtle spirit is confined by strong bars and bands of iron that baffle his efforts to escape. This imprisoned spirit, in whose ethereal nature the elements of fire and water are mingled, has been made the servant of human skill and wisdom, so that he bears heavy burdens, draws great ships and vehicles through seas and lands, and whirls the axles of intricate machines, obeying the will and performing the work of mankind. Steam! the giant spirit, by whose aid nations draw near to nations, knowledge becomes a thousand-fold, thoughts wax numberless in the world, fast and silently falling, like flakes of midnight snow!

The giant toiled mightily during the long hours—writhing in iron cells beneath ice-bound pavement—swelling against copper walls, and urging steel shafts before him, to drive the whirling wheels of presses, stamping the news of a world. His hot breath rose in clouds through gratings in the walk above, melting the snow as it fell, and warming the wintry air. And wherever those clouds of hot moisture escaped through iron gratings, there

might be seen clustered a group of little children, in tattered garb, with half-shod feet, and fingers cramped by cold. Snow swept gustily on either side, but the gratings were warm with ascending vapor, and there the shivering children crept together, clinging to the damp bars, and cowering away from the cruel storm. Like giant Steam himself, they were slaves of the Press, which clanged and thundered near. Their task was to watch for earliest printed sheets, and scatter them far and wide through city streets; crying, meanwhile, in childish treble, the news of a mighty world—that world of which, too oft, their own poor share was cold and hunger. It was sad to behold those children—the dwarfs of the Press, as Steam was its giant—crouching at such an hour in the streets of a Christian city; and it was sadder still to think that for them no mother's lullaby might thrill—no little sister's prayer be lisped to heaven.

Yet, at this hour, amid the beating storm, there came a seeker for one of that trembling group surrounding those iron bars where rose the clouds of steam. Out from the blasting drifts that swept unceasingly along the highway, there suddenly crept a diminutive figure, with head and body covered by an old plaid shawl, white with congelated snow. This figure advanced slowly to the grating, and lifting its thin arms, blue with cold, removed the shawl from a face pale as alabaster, but very sweet and infantile in feature.

"Is this Nassau street?"

The startled dwarfs rose quickly, as these words, murmured by a gentle voice, fell upon their ears. They

stared a moment in silent amazement at the small being who stood before them, shivering with cold, weighed down by the snow that clung to her scanty garments, and frightened, apparently, at her own boldness in addressing them.

"Wot yer want, little girl?" at last demanded one of them. "Wot yer doin' out in the snow, this time o' night?"

"I want to find Robert Morrison. He's a newsboy, and" ——

"Ain't no newsboy o' that name here, little girl. Yer better go home, or yer'll be took up."

"O dear!" exclaimed the child, "what shall I do? He said it was Nassau street. Isn't this Nassau street?"

"Wot yer say his name was?" asked another urchin.

"Robert Morrison," said the child, sobbing.

"Ain't no sich feller round, I tell yer," cried the dwarf who had spoken first; but his curly-pated companion interrupted him.

"I knows who yer mean," he said, nodding encouragingly to the weeping girl. "It's Bob the Weasel."

"O, no," cried the child, shaking her head, sorrowfully; "it's Robert Morrison."

"Well, what o' that? Bob the Weasel he's Rob Morrison, an' Rob Morrison he's Bob the Weasel—nothin' shorter."

The urchins laughed at this sally of their comrade, who thereupon began to brush the snow from their strange visitor's threadbare cloak.

"Look, sissy, yer all kivered," he said kindly. "Guess

yer been a-travellin'. Shet up—don't yer cry, cos I knows where Bob the Weasel is! He's yer brother, ain't he?"

"No; I haven't any brother," murmured the child.

"Wot yer want o' Bob?"

"Oh, dear, oh! My mother is dying, and Robert knows her," cried the little girl, wildly sobbing, and hiding her face with her thin hands.

"Oh, my!" exclaimed the dwarf, regarding the weeping child with wondering sympathy, while his companions gathered near, in silence. "Is that so? Come along, poor little sis, an' I'll take yer right away to Bob—I mean Rob Morrison. He's close by! Don't cry; I'll find Bob the—I mean Rob Morrison—in jes' one minute!"

Saying this, the ragged urchin gave his hand kindly to the stranger child, conducting her away from the grating, out into the thick drifts that filled the air beyond.

And as she followed, her little feet sank in the dank snow, tracking the impress of a child's travel—one, two, three—even as they had tracked that night a thousand footprints, alone, through the fearful storm.

Crossing the street, followed by the urchins whose sympathy (poor dwarfs) rendered them careless of exposure, the two children reached another sidewalk, where an iron railing protected passers-by from stumbling down a dozen steep steps which descended to the basement of a large building. On this sidewalk the snow had gathered in uneven drifts, momently changing as the wind caught up its surface in fantastic wreaths. Pausing here, the dwarf, who still held the hand of his new acquaintance, whistled

shrilly, and, after listening a moment without hearing a response, approached the railing and called loudly, "Bob! Bob!—Weasel!" The girl peered timidly down the steps that were dimly visible in the faint light of a corner lamp, and beheld a movement of some dark object in the area beneath. She drew closer then, and, bending over the railing, saw what is common enough in that locality, yet very sad to see.

Partially shielded by the masonry of the steps and lintels of a vault door below, several boys had nestled together for warmth and protection from the tempest. They were doubled and locked in each other's arms, and sleeping calmly—dreaming, it might be, of green fields and sunny waters, through the long hours of that inclement night. One lying upon another, in layers of two and three, those young outcasts—homeless and friendless, save in mutual destitution—were slumbering peacefully, like happier children who, on downy beds, were lulled with prayers and sweet "good-nights." And, by the flickering gas-light, it could be seen that, upon the sordid garments of those who lay uppermost, the snow-flakes, blown between the railing, were collected in white bars, just as they had fallen on the motionless bodies.

"W-e-a-sel!"

Another movement was perceptible in the heap of life below, and then a fragment disengaged itself, and emerged upward. It was a very small boy, whose puny proportions were more than hinted at in the name applied by his companions. He was narrow-shouldered, with spare frame and delicate limbs, and a face that was childish, yet

appeared old and weazen. Vexed at being disturbed in his nap, he muttered sulkily, rubbing his eyes—

"Wot makes yer wake a feller up for?" But, noticing the little girl among the rest, his tone altered at once, and he caught her cold hand within his own, saying—"Fanny! O poor Fanny! how is your mother?"

"Oh! Robert," responded the child, breaking into quick sobs, as she clung convulsively to the ragged urchin, "Oh! dear Robert—mother is all cramped, and can't speak."

The wind swept up sharply from the rivers, bearing new clouds of bleaker snow; but it seemed to moan for the poor babe, even while piercing icily through her thin garments. Bob the Weasel tightened the shawl about her shoulders, and spoke low and soothingly. Presently, she became calm as before, and then the Weasel drew her tenderly by the hand, leading her away into the darkness, whilst his comrades, the dwarfs, crept back to the grating where rose the breath of their fellow-slave, the giant Steam. Here, with much marvelling, they talked together of the scene just witnessed, and of the strange child who had come to seek the Weasel. Meantime, that small creature himself toiled up through the drifted street, supporting his shivering little friend; up to silent Broadway, where, during the last hour, the snow had been blown into great hillocks, high almost as the children's heads, and making barriers across the pavements. Here the Weasel stopped, and said—

"O Fanny! What a hard place! But I can carry you, if you'll let me."

"Oh, no, Robert—I can walk!"

"Jes' le' me try! You're so tired, poor Fanny, and I'm famous strong."

Then the old-faced urchin, lifting a form that was yet smaller and lighter than his own, put forth all his strength, and carried Fanny through the drift, many times staggering beneath his fragile burden.

"Don't any more, Robert! you'll hurt yourself."

"Nary bit! Let's go on," said the Weasel, breathing hard. "I could carry you all the way home."

But Fanny slid from the feeble arms that sustained her, and then, hand in hand, the wandering ones struggled forward.

"I wonder you wasn't lost, Fanny," said the Weasel. "How in the world could you find your way in all this snowy night?"

"I was afraid to stay alone," answered Fanny; "and you said, if mother"——. A fresh burst of tears checked her words.

"Yes—I said, if your mother got worse, to come and find me. But, O Fanny, I didn't believe it would snow so!"

"I couldn't get lost, 'cause I remembered where the Park was; and when I got to it, I heard the presses going."

"Oh! that's the way you found me! My! what a bright girl you are!" the Weasel said, admiringly. "But it's too bad a night for a *feller* to be out, let alone a little girl like you!" Bob straightened himself, as he said this, endeavoring to look taller than usual; but his poor weazen face was not much higher than Fanny's.

"I was so frightened, Robert, and cried so much! And then I thought I'd go for you."

"All right, Fan! you knew *I* wasn't afeard! But it was too far for you."

"Ah! Robert," sobbed the little girl, "I didn't know anybody else to go for."

A gust of wind swept by, seeming to take up those words of the lonely child, and whistle them wildly to the night. Nobody to go for—no one to seek, in all the great city, but—Bob the Weasel!

And then the little feet plodded on; and their prints—one, two, three—became marked in the snow of Broadway. But drifts followed fast, soon covering up, and effacing for ever, those slight tracks of infant travel. Will the footprints of their lives be so easily hidden? Does not every human foot impress, for good or ill, its pathway through the world—pathway which the drifts of eternal winters have no power to cover or obliterate?

Chapter III.

Kolephat College.

THE glittering garniture of snow which covered old roofing, and concealed dilapidated walls, in the square of tottering tenant houses of which Mordecai Kolephat was proprietor, and Peleg Ferret "agent" and collector of rents, did not and could not hide the squalid misery contained within its gloomy precincts. Already, though it was yet early morning, and the grocery at the corner not open to its poverty-stricken customers, there were evidences of life stirring in the purlieus of "Kolephat College." There was a dirty track in the snow, leading from the street to an open front door, and thence up a narrow staircase, dark and steep, conducting to small, confined apartments, ventilated only by broken panes of glass. This track had been made by the passing of many feet since daylight—feet of rag-pickers and bone-gatherers, sallying out to root and dig under the snow for cast-a-way scraps which were to them the material of existence; feet of beggar-children and old men, going forth to plod through drifted snow to the areas of rich men's kitchens, there to solicit a customary dole—barrier between them and starvation; feet of night-toilers or unhappy drunk-

ards and street-wanderers, creeping home at dawn to shiver into scant-covered beds; feet of hard-working shop-girls, and seamstresses, and washer-women, hurrying to labor, with a single crust to stay their hungry stomachs. Yes! long before Peleg Ferret opened his grocery-door and took down his window-shutters, a well-beaten pathway, begrimed by dirty feet, had marked the ingress and egress of Kolephat College tenants.

Peleg Ferret was tolerably well-to-do in the world, and looked-up-to, accordingly, as a thriving chandler and good citizen. His "store" was very dirty, and extensively patronized, not only by the promiscuous population under his peculiar charge, but by a variety of nondescript customers, who dwelt in several blind lanes and crooked passages which intervened between his particular locality and the jurisdiction of a Dutchman, who kept an opposition grocery at a square's distance. Peleg was known as a stirring politician of his ward, and likewise as a hard creditor: attending primary meetings punctually, and presenting weekly bills promptly. He prided himself upon being a "blunt man," and quoted freely from the ancients such aphorisms as "Be just before you are generous," and "Charity begins at home." He was the resident agent of Mr. Kolephat's property in and around "Kolephat College," and it was, in fact, his own delicate fancy which had bestowed this name upon the square of tumbling-down tenements that his equally happy satire dignified with the name of "dwelling-houses," forming a dingy close from end to end of a brick-paved alley, running beside his corner-store. Mr. Ferret rented these tenements, to be

sure, "rather promiscu'sly," as he was wont to observe, when jocose—being only particular upon one essential point, namely, that every applicant should exhibit the possession of sufficient goods, chattels, etc., as might warrant security for the payment of one month's rent, expense of "settling" included. In consequence of this "wise precaution," which Mr. F. aphoristically declared to be "the parent of security," as well as from the fact that his method of "settling" was to the last degree summary (comprising the prompt ejectment of tenant and locking up of tenant's domicil, goods secured), this provident grocer and faithful agent seldom suffered by delinquent debtors. Moreover, being a bachelor, he "lived in chambers," occupying a couple of rooms framed in a loft above his grocery, and thus established a sort of reconnoitring post, whence a constant surveillance could be exercised over the vagabond denizens of Kolephat College and its rickety surroundings. By this means, he contrived to gain timely notice of any movement betokening bad faith on the part of a tenant; no vagrant chair, bench, or stool being allowed to pass the corner barrier without watchful observation and prompt detention by himself or the moon-faced shop-boy, who was kept on the lookout; for Mr. Ferret estimated every item of miserable furniture used by tenants to be inventoried solely for the landlord's ultimate benefit, representing so much collateral, not to be interfered with by insatiate pawnbrokers. Seldom did a week elapse without witnessing the transfer of some last pauper comfort, from a suddenly-vacated apartment to the capacious storeroom of the grocer, there to be appraised and

held for rent, while its despairing owner was ejected to seek shelter, where shelter alone could be found—in the poorhouse. Occasionally, indeed, a spirit of obstinacy, or perhaps a slight inkling of legal points, on the part of debtors, constrained Peleg to "due course of law;" but, in general, he encountered little difficulty in impressing his evil-doing lodgers with such wholesome terror, that they were glad to escape his justice, even with the loss of all their wretched possessions.

Mr. Peleg Ferret enjoyed another strategic pleasure by reason of his proximity to Kolephat College—a pleasure equally combined with profit, inasmuch as it enabled him to learn the habits, means of life, and general domestic history of his tenants. There was a passage leading from the cellar of his store to damp vaults beneath the tenant-house, by which, whenever he wanted, he could penetrate into the dark entries above, and possess himself of much valuable information, at a small expense of time in eavesdropping. This innocent recreation acquainted the prudent agent betimes with the condition of desponding debtors, enabling him to detect incipient bankruptcy in season for his own personal security.

The tenant-house itself was an interesting field of exploration, being one of original construction and economical apportionment, as well as wholly guiltless of "all the modern improvements." The primary portion of it had been used as a church, in times when churches were built of less costly materials than at present are used; and the copings and clapboards, mildewed and worm-eaten, which formed the ancient walls, had been after-

wards pierced with narrow windows and doors, and corridored and staircased with unhewn pine, to afford means of climbing from base to roof. Within, cheap floors and ceilings spanned the wide area, once occupied by pews and gallery, and thin partitions of panels, or laths and plaster, intersected each other, cutting up every available foot of space into narrow rooms or cells, in which human beings were expected to exist, without light or air, save the niggard apology for those elements received through cramped passages and dirt-obscured casements. In this collection of wooden dens (as Mr. Peleg Ferret knew by his tenant-book) there dwelt one hundred and thirty odd families, comprising more than four hundred individuals of all sexes, ages, and complexions, in a matter of one hundred divisions, as they might be termed, made by the board and lath partitions. In those dens, moreover, ate and drank (when they had wherewith), slept (when the cold or vermin permitted), suffered, fought, revelled, blasphemed, toiled, prayed hopelessly, and died, year by year, scores upon scores of human beings, in the guise of men, women, and children, of whom the world knew nothing, save through coroners' inquests, police-reports, or pauper statistics, and of whom Mr. Kolephat and Mr. Ferret cared nothing, save to collect of them inexorably the monthly extortion of rent.

In the summer season, when flowers bloom and harvests wax golden, and orchards rock with luxuriant fruitage—when the merchant leaves his ledger, the mechanic his bench, the student his books, to run out upon the hill-side and catch short breaths of heaven's air—in such balmy,

fragrant summer-time, Peleg Ferret could always find his wretched tenants "at home."

At home! in the stifling, noisome dwelling-dens of Kolephat College—at home, amid infection, fever-damp, corruption; at home, with no blessed breeze of heaven, no fragrance, no bloom, but only one horrible, life-wasting malaria!

But in the winter months, Peleg Ferret did not always find his tenants at home! Sometimes, when he entered that crowded tenant-house, unwelcome even as the biting wind, there came no response to his demand; for the fearful inmates of some desolate room had crawled out, amid frost and snow, to beg or steal, appalled at the approach of hunger and darkness. Then Peleg would watch craftily, or set his moon-faced shop-boy as scout to intercept the returning wretch, and clamor for the rent. At other times, the agent would get no answer to his demand, because the lonely tenant within was dead. Then Peleg would grumble, send for a policeman, and calculate his profit and loss. But as a general thing, the grocer, as we have said, did not lose much; for he tracked and worried his tenants till they feared the sound of his creaking boot. He was a faithful agent, this Peleg Ferret, and though he saw his tenants dragging their weak bodies to soup-houses, to struggle for scanty charity—though he encountered on the stairs of Kolephat College hundreds of desperate-looking people—lean children, and haggard-faced mothers, and palsied old men—Peleg failed not to collect his rent. He was a faithful steward!

Yet they were not all vile and vicious who dwelt in

Kolephat College. Sometimes—far up in dens under the mouldering roof, or in clammy vaults in the horrible basement—there were dwelling pure souls and honest hearts; pure and honest amid crime and misery surrounding them. But Peleg Ferret, as a faithful agent, knew no difference between the good and bad, save the difference in rates of the dens, which he rented for the sums of four, six, and eight dollars per month, respectively.

So, therefore, it was with a business-like air that his creaking boots sounded on the thresholds of the various doors of the tenant-house, about an hour after sunrise, and a while, even, before his moon-faced clerk had fairly removed the grocery-shutters, and placed that intricate establishment in order for custom. It was a maxim of Mr. Ferret, that "the early bird catches the worm," and, in illustration of its wisdom, he was always "up and round," as he expressed it, at the earliest hour of rent-day. With leather-covered book, in which the immutable accounts of landlord and tenant were scored, in figures ominous to the latter, when poverty pressed hard, the grocer entered each dingy passage, ascended each narrow staircase, knocked at each shaking door, with a consciousness of power and determination of executing it, that none but a faithful agent, such as he, could feel. Then it was that suppressed pleadings might be overheard by listeners in Kolephat College—pleadings of distress, cut short by abrupt rebukes and stern threatenings; then it was that perishing women became faint, and Peleg said they were "shamming;" and ghastly, half-starved men

told of sickness and no work, and Peleg said they were drunk and lazy.

On the third story of the tenant-house, and at the extremity of a long, narrow, and dark passage, the agent knocked at a door twice, without receiving any response, and then pushing it rudely, caused the worm-eaten woodwork, which held the inner hasp, to give way suddenly, allowing him entrance. The room was damp, and so dimly lighted by its single window, which opened within five feet of a brick wall in the rear, that for a moment Peleg found it difficult to distinguish any object within. Presently, however, as he paused near the threshold, peering curiously about, he caught sight of what appeared to be a bundle of dirty clothing rolled up at the edge of the hearth, upon which a pile of cold ashes rested between two bricks that had served for andirons. Peleg advanced toward this bundle, and discovered, what he suspected, that it contained human life. Two children, clasped in each other's arms, were wrapt in a tattered coverlid and dirty piece of carpet, and sleeping so soundly that the alarm and approach of Ferret did not awaken them. The agent struck the bundle with his foot.

"Hillo, there!—what's all this? What are ye doing here, young 'uns?" he said, as he kicked away the covering from the two children. "Stir your stumps, vagabonds, and let's know where your mother is!"

At the first tones of the man's voice, the little heads had started suddenly from their recumbent position, and the frightened eyes were lifted to encounter Peleg's scrutinizing gaze. Then the youngest of the children burst

into tears, and covered her face with her thin, trembling hands.

"Here! come, now, none o' that! where's your mother? Don't she know her rent's due? I let her off a week ago, when she couldn't pay in advance; but I can't let her up no longer. Where's she gone so airly?—eh?"

"She's gittin' her purse out to pay yer," here interposed the other child, with a look of undisguised malice levelled at the agent. "Look there, mister! don't you see her?" With these words, he pointed a bony arm towards a sort of recess in the darkest corner of the dingy apartment.

Peleg Ferret looked in the direction indicated, and saw a truckle-bed, on which a few shreds of covering were apparently drawn together near its foot-board, but no form was visible upon the straw mattress.

"Don't yer see her? she's a-waitin' to pay yer," reiterated the urchin, who had now risen from beside his weeping companion, and stood, with his weasen face lifted towards that of Ferret, who remained silent. Then, shuffling over the floor, to the bed, the boy drew away a portion of the rags at its foot, and disclosed the corpse of a woman, not recumbent, as the dead should lie, but with cramped limbs, drawn up, the knees almost in contact with the chin, and the body half fallen from the low bedside to the floor. Peleg Ferret, hardened as he was, and accustomed to sights of misery, started at this frightful spectacle, and uttered an exclamation of horror.

"D'yer want her to pay yer?" asked the boy, fixing his small eyes upon the agent, with a glance that made

the latter almost tremble, as it seemed to look into his sordid soul. But the man of business recovered himself instantly.

Such occurrences as death in a tenant-house were not so rare as to impress Mr. Ferret with any long-continued emotion; and though the sudden disclosure of the contorted form, indicative as it was of a violent and painful death, had for a moment agitated him, the purport of his morning visit did not escape his mind. It was rent-day, and he had come to collect his dues, like a faithful agent, as he was. Consequently, his next impulse was a purely mechanical one, suggesting a mental inventory of the articles which constituted the wretched movables of the apartment. Computation was not, indeed, difficult; for, save the miserable truckle-bed and sordid mattress, no other furniture but a deal table, a pine stool, and child's small chair, with a few domestic utensils, and an old chest, were to be discovered in the poor apartment. On the table, stuck in a broken bottle, was the last fragment of a tallow candle, which had flickered its dying rays upon the closing convulsions of the poor woman—its light going out with hers.

Peleg Ferret, as he glanced hurriedly upon the corpse, on whose white brow the trace of agony was yet visible, did not trouble himself to fancy how terrible must have been the moment of dissolution, when that departing mother looked last upon her orphan child, left to a cold world's neglect; he did not annoy himself with reflecting how, through the long dark hours, those little ones had cowered tremblingly in the death-chamber, crouching

beside the perishing embers, until at length, exhausted with watching, they had sunk to slumber on the cold floor.

Peleg Ferret was not given to sentiment, and he had witnessed poverty, and disease, and death in tenant-houses before. Nevertheless, as he peered calculatingly over the apartment, the agent began to experience an uncomfortable sensation, becoming aware that every motion of his eye was watched by the quick glance of the boy who had so jeeringly called his attention to the truckle-bed. There was an oldish, precocious meaning in the lad's eye, and a pertinacity in his regards, which so aroused Mr. Ferret's temper, that he turned abruptly on the weazen-faced urchin:

"Ye young vagabond," he cried, catching him by the collar of his threadbare jacket, "come, now, what are ye up to?"

The boy replied only with a leer, that served to exasperate the agent, who shook him roughly a moment, and then recoiled, with a muttered expletive, from a well-directed kick which the youngster dealt upon the tenderest portion of his knee-joint. At the same instant, a movement on the part of the other child diverted Ferret's attention. Still sobbing bitterly, the little girl had risen, and was reaching for a broken tea-cup which stood upon a jutting edge of the fire-place. As she lifted it, the agent's quick ear caught the chink of silver, and he hastily released his hold of the boy's collar.

"Well, sis—what's that? Something to pay the rent? Eh, sis?"

"My mother put it away, for to pay the rent," sobbed the child.

"Ah, you don't say so! That's right! Come, now, your mother was right honest, wasn't she, sis?" said Peleg, blandly, as he possessed himself of the broken tea-cup which the girl held out to him; but the boy rushed forward, and snatched it suddenly from his hand.

"Don't let him have it, Fan! It's yours, and yer ain't got nothin' else," he cried, transferring the few silver coins which the vessel contained to his own hand; "you've got more right to it than old Ferret has."

Fanny remained silent and trembling, amazed at the temerity of her companion, and impressed with a doubt as to her own correctness in yielding the tea-cup with its contents to Peleg Ferret. That worthy himself could with difficulty credit his senses, in witnessing the hardihood of the diminutive urchin, who so boldly confronted him.

"Yer ought ter be ashamed, yer mean old thief!" muttered the latter. "Yer want ter take a poor orphan child's last shillin', yer do." Then, turning reassuringly to the girl: "But he shan't do it, Fan—ye needn't be afeard."

"Oh, Robert—it *was* for the rent, mother said," exclaimed the child, with a new burst of tears.

"I know'd that," replied the newsboy, shaking his head. "I know'd how your poor mother tried to scrape all she could together, last week—a wearin' her eyes out, an' gettin' cramp colic, workin' all night on them ile-cloth pantaloons an' shirts at four cents a-piece. I know'd all about that, Fanny," ——

Here Bob the Weasel brushed away a mist from his eyes with one hand, while he held the silver change tightly in the other.

"Look here, youngster," interrupted Peleg Ferret, "you aren't one o' the family? You aren't brother to this ere little 'un!"

"No! I ain't, but I'm goin' to be," rejoined Bob the Weasel, straightening his slight form. "She ain't got no one to purtect her—and *I'll* purtect her."

The agent glanced a moment from the small, old-faced child, whose eyes flashed as he uttered the last words, to the yet smaller orphan, of whom, with a spirit worthy of ancient knighthood, he avowed himself the champion, and who testified her appreciation of such a defender by another gush of tears. To Peleg Ferret, the scene began to present puzzling features, and he gave expression to his astonishment in a prolonged whistle.

"Be you witches?" the agent half-muttered between his teeth, as he surveyed the two children. Then, with an effort at temporizing, as the best means of proceeding, he continued: "Did your mother die last night, sis? She was right honest, wasn't she, to tell you to pay the rent?"

"I say, now, yer ain't goin' to get it," cried Bob the Weasel, fiercely. "Ye're tryin' to coax that little girl, but it ain't no go. Her mother died o' cramp colic, 'cause she was hungry, and a'most friz, too; and now yer want to take a few shillin's she's left. Yer ain't no man, or yer wouldn't think o' sich mean business."

This last appeal of the Weasel, delivered in vehement

language, seemed to reach some chord of feeling, either of shame or sympathy, in the agent's bosom; for he hastily shifted his position, and muttered:

"If the woman was so poor, why didn't she say so? It can't be helped now, rent or no rent. What's to come o' this little girl, youngster?"

"Yer jes' let the little girl alone, will yer?" returned the newsboy.

"Who's to bury her mother?" suggested the agent.

"Potter's Field, I s'pose!" said Bob the Weasel, at which rejoinder Peleg Ferret emitted another expressive whistle.

"Well, if *you* ain't one of 'em," he cried, surveying the small newsboy, with a wondering stare. "What do *you* know about Potter's Field?"

"Ain't I *poor*? say!" was the reply of Bob the Weasel. "Oughtn't poor folks to know where they're goin' to!"

"You're too much for me—that's so," said the agent, soliloquizingly, as he turned away. "Well, you take care o' this little girl, and I'll send for the coroner. That's the quickest way to fix it." Saying this, Peleg left the children to themselves.

The orphan Fanny listened tearfully, as Peleg Ferret's heavy boots tramped, step by step, away from the apartment, and down the narrow stairs, which he descended in search of a policeman. Bob the Weasel took her kindly by the hand, and tried, in his quaint way, to comfort her, by renewed assurances of *his* protection.

"Old Ferret shan't hurt yer—don't be afeard, Fanny,"

said he ; and, in answer, the child looked at him through her blinding tears, and murmured :

"Oh, Rob ! what's Potter's Field ? Must mother be put in Potter's Field ?"

"That's where they put poor folks ! But don't cry, Fanny."

"Must my mother be put there ?" asked the orphan, sobbing bitterly.

"Don't cry—don't cry, Fanny !" said the newsboy, striving to appear very stout-hearted ; but as he uttered the cheering sentence, a sob came up in his throat, and choked the last word.

"O Robert—*you* are crying yourself !" exclaimed the orphan, with renewed grief ; and at the discovery, her head fell heavily on the boy's coarse jacket, which smothered the quick sobs breaking thickly from her breast ; while tears, that could no longer be checked, gushed from the Weasel's eyes, and fell fast upon the poor little forehead that hid itself in his bosom. Still, however, the newsboy whispered soothing words, and presently, with an instinct of sympathy that was strangely delicate, lifted his desolate little charge across the damp floor, and placed her by her mother's lifeless form. The grey light of morning crept dimly through the discolored window panes, and painted ashy hues upon the rigid features of the dead ; but, as the children's eyes fell upon them, it almost seemed as if the stamp of agony which had impressed the cold lips gave place, for the moment, to a placid smile for the orphan. Fanny clasped her thin hands together, as the newsboy supported her, and said to him, suddenly—

"Robert! I want to pray."

"What for?" asked the Weasel.

"I want to ask the Lord to help us, Robert."

"That ain't no good. The Lord don't know us."

"O Robert! don't you ever pray to the Lord?"

"No? what for?"

"Not to be put in Potter's Field," exclaimed the orphan, with a new burst of grief. "O Robert! I don't want poor mother to be put in Potter's Field."

"Don't you cry, Fanny! You and me is both orphans now! We ain't nu'ther of us got any father or mother—have we, Fanny?"

"No, Robert," returned the child; then, looking timidly in his face, she added, "Yes, Robert, I *think* we have a Father!—God is our Father!"

"Who says so?"

"My mother told me so! Mother said God was the Father of orphan children, and we're both orphan children, Robert—you said so, just now."

"That's so, Fanny."

"Oughtn't we to pray a little, Robert?"

"I dunno how."

"Don't you know 'Our Father which art in Heaven?'"

"No! I never heard anybody pray! How should I know?"

"Please say 'Our Father' with me, Robert! I think I'll feel better if I do. Say, 'Our Father which art in heaven,'" ——

"'Father which art in heaven!'"

"'Hallowed be thy name!'"

"'Hallowed be thy name!' What's that mean, Fan?"

"I don't know, exactly, Robert—but it's good! Mother used to pray so."

"Well, go on, Fan."

"Blowed if them children ain't a playin' on the bed," cried a rough voice, as a burly man, in the garb of a police-officer, appeared on the threshold, accompanied by Mr. Ferret and the coroner. "Hillo, youngsters! aren't ye ashamed to be making sport o' your poor dead mother?"

At this untimely interruption, the frightened girl slid from the bedside, on which the Weasel had lifted her, and shrank weeping into the corner. The newsboy stood his ground, with a glare of defiance at the intruders.

"Here, you—just you give up that money you stole!" said the policeman, looking sternly at the boy.

"What money?"

"The money that was in the tea-cup," interrupted Ferret.

"It's *hers*," answered the Weasel, with a significant jerk of his head towards the corner where Fanny had taken refuge.

"Just you give it up, and no gammon," said the policeman. "We'll settle who it belongs to."

"*He's* a cute 'un," whispered Ferret, as the newsboy appeared to hesitate. "Reg'lar 'old head on young shoulders.'"

"Jes' you shet up, yer old thief!" muttered the Weasel.

"Will you give it up, or go to the station-house?" asked the policeman, sententiously, winking alternately, to

the agent and the coroner, with his dexter and sinister eye.

"I won't do nu'ther," suddenly ejaculated the newsboy; and then, springing forward like a cat, he darted under the uplifted arm of the representative of law, and bounding against Mr. Ferret with such force as to destroy that individual's equilibrium entirely, disappeared in the dark passageway beyond, and the next moment was heard jumping down the staircase.

"Stop thief!" yelled the policeman; and "Stop thief!" echoed the agent, as he recovered from his overthrow; and immediately there rose from the entry below, and the alleyway without, a confusion of discordant cries, followed by a rush of squalid men and women to the open door of the death-chamber.

Then the inquest went on; and neighbors who dwelt in poverty, and filth, and darkness, on every floor of the tenant-house, beneath, around, and above, gathered about the bed of a tenant who had paid her last debt. The little child, terrified and sorrowing, was interrogated by the pompous coroner, and related how her mother had died from cramps, in the night, speechless and agonized; how, during a week previous, she had stitched clothing for oil-suits, working all the days and most of the nights, to earn sufficient to pay her week's rent; how they had shivered from cold, and eaten only crust and water; until the night before, when "mother was taken with cramps," and the child had gone for a penny's worth of tea, and mixed a cup for her mother; how the poor woman had suffered afterwards, without fire or medicine, because her week's earn-

ing were laid by in a broken cup for the "rent," next morning; how, finally, the child had become frightened, and gone out in the storm to seek her only acquaintance, Robert Morrison.

"And who was this Robert Morrison?" the coroner asked.

He was a newsboy who had found a penny which the child had lost in the street, when going for milk one day, and, on the strength of a few weeks' acquaintance, had become somewhat of a protector. Robert had told her to come for him, if her mother grew worse, and she had sought and brought him home; but only in time to see her poor mother die.

"He's not so bad a boy, after all," said the policeman, rubbing his eyes with the back of his hand; while Mr. Ferret went on to testify that he had known deceased five weeks; she had paid her first month's rent in advance, but had begged off on the second, and he had "let her up" a week; and the week was just passed, but *that* boy had run away with the rent-money; didn't know anything else about deceased; wasn't in the habit of inquiring about tenants, only as to ability to meet rent: a good many tenants had cramps and rheumatism in Kolephat College.

"Whose daguerreotype was that which was found clasped in the hand of deceased?" the coroner inquired.

Mr. Ferret said it was of no value—an old one, in a broken case; the child said it was a picture of her mother, and begged that it might be given to her. "Mother gave it to me," she said. At this juncture, the burly police-

man took out his handkerchief, blew his nose with great force, and exclaimed vehemently—

"Blowed if the child shan't have that picter, any how."

So the inquest went on, and a permit was made out for burial in Potter's Field.

Chapter IV.

The Weasel and Samson.

THE cry of "stop thief!" served only to quicken the motions of Bob the Weasel, who dashed down the uneven and rickety stairs, and through narrow passages, out into the brick-walled court, with a celerity not inferior to that of the little animal whose name had been applied to him by his fellow-newsboys. The tenants scarcely noticed his agile and diminutive figure, ere it had emerged from their neighborhood, and was flying down an adjoining street, over heaps of unshovelled snow. Arrived at a point which he judged to be beyond danger, Bob paused to recover breath, and, kicking away the drift upon a door-step, sat himself down to rest, just as a somewhat older lad darted around the adjoining corner, crying the morning papers at the top of his voice.

"Hillo, Weasel!" ejaculated the latter, recognizing a fellow-professional: "where's your papers? Is you retired from business, Weasel?"

"Sellin' papers is all up, *this* mornin', I'm afeared," returned Bob. "But I haven't bought none, and so I shan't be stuck."

"Nobody's out—that's a fact," rejoined the other, lugu-

briously. "All the streets is blocked up, and no cars don't run nu'ther."

"Give us half a dozen, and I'll sell 'em anyhow," said the Weasel, drawing some change from his pocket. "Two *'Eralds*, and two *Times*, and two *Tribunes!* yes, and two *Suns*, if you like, Smokyback."

The Weasel made this demand with a very business-like air, and it was responded to in like manner by his *confrère*, who counted out the papers, received the change, and was off, the next instant, in chase of a pedestrian whom he discovered plodding through an opposite snow-bank. Bob counted his purchase with great deliberation, and was about to resume his travel, when the door before which he had seated himself opened slowly, and an old man appeared on the threshold.

"Paper, sir—mornin' papers?" were the quick exclamations of the Weasel, the instant that his sharp eye caught a glimpse of the moving door.

"Yes, lad—come here!" replied the old gentleman, whose figure was bent almost double, and who leaned on an ivory-headed cane. His attire was a threadbare camlet cloak, fastened about the neck by clasps of brass, and a suit of rusty black, well-patched and worn shiny, like the cloak. His head was covered with a broad-brimmed napless hat, beneath which his grey curls escaped, falling on either side of the face. His eyes were of a clear blue, and very bright, and there was a ruddy hue on his cheek, and a gentle expression about the lips, that struck the Weasel as very pleasant to see.

"Come in, my lad, to the hall; for I have yet to make

out the change," said the old man. "Samson has gone early to the post-office, and the carrier left us no paper this morning." He began to fumble in his pocket, as he said this.

"Please, sir, it's such a bad storm, the carriers has a hard time," suggested Bob, encouraged, by the old gentleman's invitation, to edge forward, and step upon the door-mat.

"Yes, yes—it was indeed a terrible storm! Ah! here is a shilling! Yes—a grievous storm! God help the poor! Here, my boy—can you make change? Yes! God pity those who must be out in such storms!"

The Weasel looked up scrutinizingly to the old gentleman's face, and saw his eyelids wet, as with a tear, and at that moment Bob forgot to count, penny by penny, the change which he was tendering for a shilling piece.

"Please, sir," he said, hesitatingly, and scratching the door-mat with his half-shod feet, "I—*I* was out in that storm, last night, and"——

Here the Weasel stopped short, alarmed at his own boldness; but the expression of the old gentleman's face was reassuring.

"Bless me, child! what were you doing out?" exclaimed the latter.

"With a little girl—arter one o'clock, in the big drifts down Broadway!—a little girl so-high!" cried the Weasel, indicating the supposed stature of Fanny by a motion of his hand downward, to the floor.

"Poor children! Were you lost?" inquired the aged man, with much simplicity.

"No, *sir!*" answered Bob, with emphasis; "you can't git *me* lost, nohow."

"What were you doing away from home, my little boy?"

"Home!" repeated Bob, with a curious expression on his face, as he let his glance fall to the door-mat, "supposin' a feller hain't got no home?"

"My gracious!" exclaimed the old gentleman, compressing his lips, and elevating his brows, to examine the newsboy more attentively. "Do you tell me you have no home, my child? Where, then, do you live?—where do you sleep?"

"Sometimes in a wagon, and sometimes in a barrel," returned the Weasel, sententiously.

"Bless me!" cried the old gentleman, drawing a long breath, as he continued to survey the curious little figure before him. Then, shaking his head, while a sad expression came over his benevolent countenance—"I fear you are telling me untruths," he added, solemnly.

"No, I ain't," cried Bob, raising his voice, and looking straight upward to his companion.

"I hope not, my boy," said the latter. "But what you tell me is very improbable. Have you no parents?"

"Nary one," answered Bob.

"What is your name?"

"Which name?"

"Why, bless me! the name you go by!"

"Bob the Weasel."

"There, now!" exclaimed the old gentleman, getting quite red in the face. "You are I fear, a sad little boy!

you are making game of me! It is very wrong—very wrong, my lad! Now, go!—there! I'm sorry—very sorry!"

Bob felt his temper rising, and he was about to reply angrily, with some expletive such as should demonstrate his feelings; but as the old man turned his head, the newsboy saw that a big tear was staining the ruddy cheek.

"My! what a funny old cove!" he said to himself, and with this reflective observation, was about to retire, when he bethought him that he still held the change for his customer's shilling.

"Here's your change, mister," said the Weasel.

"Keep the money, boy, and never tell falsehoods any more! It's wrong—very wrong!"

"You be blowed!" cried Bob, indignantly; and, flinging the pennies at the old man's feet, he sprang, with a loud whoop, through the open door, just in time to dash himself full against the stomach of an old negro man of herculean proportions, who had just ascended the steps.

"Sakes alive!" ejaculated the new-comer, as the newsboy's thin form rebounded from his own, almost doubling him, at the same time, like the old gentleman within. "What am dat?" Then, recovering himself, he stepped cautiously in, and glanced with astonishment about him.

"Poor lad! is he hurt? Look, Samson—look!" cried the master, observing that the newsboy lay without motion on the floor. The negro stooped, and lifting the weazen face, saw that it had become ghastly pale, and that blood

was slowly trickling from a cut which had been inflicted by a projecting moulding of the cornice.

"Bress de chile?" exclaimed the black; "what for he dash hisself agin me? O massa! I'se feared he quite dead! Ugh!"

"Nonsense, Samson! lift him gently, and carry him into the library. Dear me! this is so painful! Poor child! Was he frightened at *me!*"

Saying this, the old gentleman hurried through the hall, in advance of the negro, who lifted the Weasel like an infant in his strong arms, and carried him gently to the library, where burned a bright fire of sea-coal, while a sofa, piled with cushions, was wheeled to one side of it. On this sofa the wounded lad was placed, while the master rang a little silver bell, which was immediately answered by the appearance of an old lady, clad in a black stuff gown, with a spotless kerchief crossed over her bosom, and a high-starched cap crowning her evenly-parted grey hair. This matronly-looking personage paused in astonishment, as she beheld the object on the sofa, and clasping her hands together impressively, exclaimed:

"Laws! me! what a dirty child!"

"Please to look at the child's head, for the present, madam," remarked the old gentleman, somewhat stiffly. "I fear he is hurt seriously.

"And what an old face for a child!" pursued the lady, as she inspected the Weasel more closely.

"Bless me, madam! have you no feeling? Can you not see the boy is wounded? Here, Samson! Samson! go for a doctor, at once, as Mrs. George is so critical!"

Samson rolled up his eyes, as if in astonishment at his master's unwonted agitation ; and Mrs. George herself seemed to be rebuked ; for she proceeded at once to adjust the pillows under Bob's head, and then bustled away to procure sponge and water to bathe the "beggar's head," as she mutteringly expressed herself, though not loud enough to reach the master's ears.

"I fear Mrs. George has not proper feeling," said the old gentleman, sadly. "But, I dare say she knows more than I about these boys. Samson, what do you think this child said?—that he has no home, and sleeps in—bless me!—in a barrel!"

"Berry likely, massa!" rejoined the negro, showing his white teeth.

"What, what, Samson! was it true, do you think? And his name, he said, was—'Bob the Weasel!'"

"Berry probably, massa. Dey gib sich quare names to de newsboys. Dat am sartain, massa."

"Goodness! then I must have wronged the poor child ; and he was not telling untruths, at all. Poor boy! poor boy!"

The old gentleman, all unheedful of the dirt which Mrs. George found so distasteful, here patted softly the matted hair of the newsboy, as it fell over his pallid cheek ; at which caressing movement, Mrs. George, entering, at the moment, with washes and linen, could not repress an expression of alarm.

"Mercy on us, Mr. Granby!—supposing that child should have something catching!"

"Samson, had you not better dress the lad's cut, as

Mrs. George is timid?" asked the master, in a quiet tone, which had the effect of disposing the trim housekeeper to a silent application of her remedial skill; while the old gentleman himself looked on, with hands clasped behind him; Samson, meantime, removing the threadbare camlet cloak that had enveloped his person.

"Sleeps in wagons and barrels, and is named after a weasel!" murmured Mr. Granby. "What a very curious child, Samson!"

"Dis is a berry cur'ous world, massa."

"That is true, Samson; and the saying is likewise true, that one half the world knows not what the other half suffers—or how it lives! But this child said he was out in the dreadful storm of last night, and with another baby like himself! Could that have been true, Samson?"

"Dese newsboys am berry tough," suggested the negro.

"But another—a little girl with him, in the violent storm!"

"Mebbe it was a fib, and mebbe not," was Samson's non-committal response. "You nebber knows how to take dese boys."

"We must see—we must inquire," said Mr. Granby. "It is a strange matter. Ah! thank God! he revives—his eyes are open!" continued the good old man, as the color began to return to Bob's face, under the emollient stimulus which the housekeeper had applied. "How do you feel, my poor boy?"

The Weasel's glance wandered vacantly round, for his faintness had been as much the result of exhaustion from

watching and abstinence, as the effect of his sudden shock; his poor thin lips fluttered, and half breathed a word.

"What does he say, Mrs. George?"

"I thought he said 'Fanny!'"

"It must be his sister. Perhaps it was she who was with him in the storm. Hush! he is trying to speak again!"

"What an odd creature, to be sure!" remarked the housekeeper, listening to the half-formed syllables. "What on earth can he mean by that?"

"What is it, Mrs. George?"

"He says 'Potter's Field!' First 'Fanny,' and now 'Potter's Field!' What connection can there be between the two? He's an odd boy, I do declare!"

Mrs. George! you are wise in your generation, and have a horror of uncleanliness, as every good housewife should. But you are not wise as regards the human heart!—nor of the heart which throbs faintly beneath the coarse jacket of that outcast newsboy—Bob the Weasel!

"What does he say now, Mrs. George? Bless me! he has fainted again!"

"He has, indeed, and is quite cold!" exclaimed the housekeeper, now much alarmed.

"Samson, you had better go for a doctor!"

"No, no! the cut is not deep! He is very weak," said Mrs. George. "Poor child! Perhaps he is starving."

And with this thought, the good woman seemed sud-

denly to forget the dirt and shabbiness of Bob, and proceeded to apply new lotions and administer restoring stimulants to her charge, which soon had the effect of imparting strength to his feeble frame. In an hour longer, he was sitting up, propped by the pillows of Mr. Granby's sofa, and relating to that wondering old gentleman the particulars of his acquaintance with Fanny the orphan—of their midnight tramp through the snow, and of their lonely watch by the corpse, in cold and darkness. Samson stood behind his master's arm-chair, with mouth and eyes distended. Mr. Granby listened, with many nods of the head and upliftings of the hand, and even Mrs. George lost sight entirely of the weazen face, while she followed the Weasel's quaint recital, with newly-awakened sympathy.

The result of the narration (for Bob had been previously regaled with a nourishing repast) was a direction from Mr. Granby to Mrs. George to allow the child to have a sound sleep upon the cushions, while himself, accompanied by Samson, would proceed as soon as possible to Kolephat College, there to ascertain the condition of the orphan Fanny.

"That's what the poor boy meant by 'Fanny,'" said the master to his man, as, wrapped once more in his camlet cloak, he led the way to the street.

"And 'Potter's Field,' massa! Dat's de connection Missy George couldn't find out."

Chapter V.

Tenants of Foley's Barracks.

IF poverty be a sin, there was a poor widow who dwelt in Foley's Barracks, who might be said to be very wicked, indeed; if patience and industry be virtues, this same widow was nearly angelic in their practice. She had been, during many years, a tenant of one of the humblest rooms in the third story of that crowded wilderness of brick, and had there reared a young daughter, now in her fifteenth year. A small room, of twelve feet square, with a dark and narrow closet adjoining, dignified by the name of bed-chamber, constituted premises for which the widow Marvin paid a monthly rent of six dollars, the means to meet which she laboriously scraped together by a division of her daily time into as many varieties of work as she could fortunately obtain to do; sometimes securing the job of house-cleaning in some friendly patron's family, sometimes toiling at the wash-tub at home, periodically scrubbing the floors and paint of a neighboring schoolhouse, and always ready with her needle at odd bits of plain sewing, on shirts or coarse garments, in default of having which, she plied the same busy implement in keeping her own shabby clothing, as well as that of her child,

most scrupulously free from raggedness. The neighbors on the third floor (and the oldest remembered her as their predecessor) testified to her virtues as a fellow-tenant, never quarrelsome or annoying; and one and all remarked, with much marvelling thereat, that "Widow Marvin was a good woman, and beat the world for keeping clean."

How this latter excellence became so noted in the widow was, indeed, not strange, though how she contrived to deserve it might be a problem to any one at all conversant with the habits of tenants in Foley's Barracks, or with the difficulties which the pursuit of cleanliness in so filthy a place must entail upon such as sought to possess that quality akin to godliness. It must be owned that great hardship and incessant care were prerequisites; for heavy pails of water were to be carried through narrow entries and up steep staircases, trodden daily by thousands of feet; and varieties of garbage and accumulations were to be carried downward through the same avenues; all this, it may be fancied, adding arduous features to the good woman's domestic industry. Nevertheless, Widow Marvin did manage, through many, many years, to deserve and maintain the reputation of a "clean body that ought to be a pattern;" while it is extremely problematical if the pattern was followed by many of the residents in Foley's Barracks. Little, however, did the poor soul think of influencing by her example, though perhaps it had a good effect, of which she was wholly unconscious. She loved to be neat herself, and to make her humble domicile as comfortable as smoky chimneys, damp walls, and stifling closeness would allow; and so, day after day,

through year and year, she scrubbed the floors and walls, polished the row of tin vessels on her pine dresser, kept her hearth bright with "redding," and her narrow windows clean, for the early sun to peep into unashamed. Such habits produced their natural result, in imparting neatness and taste to her child; and, therefore, much to the wonder of improvident and reckless neighbors, Emily Marvin, the widow's little daughter, grew up totally unlike the squalid children on every floor of the Barracks—never absenting herself from her mother to make acquaintances among the constantly-changing tenants, but learning, little by little, to imitate the widow's industry, and unconsciously wearing her patched but spotless clothes with an easy grace that might have been remarked in quarters remote from this miserable tenant-house.

It might have been, that the Widow Marvin's stated task of cleaning the district school-house suggested to her mind the importance of attention to her daughter's childish mind; though it is more likely that the fact (well-whispered about the Barracks) of her having herself "seen better days," determined the good woman to afford her child such means as could be commanded, to obtain an education. Indeed, there were some who averred that the widow was not devoid of accomplishments learned in youth, and that she had been known to "play tunes" on a piano-forte, in some remote period, albeit her fingers were now stiff with hard toil. Be that as it may, the mother denied herself many a comfort, in order that her daughter could go decently to a daily school, the result of which was that Emily, who was naturally quick and intel-

ligent, became, at a very early age, possessed of much useful knowledge, while other children of her condition in the Barracks had learned only lessons of cunning or depravity. Well, in sooth, was the widow repaid for her privations and struggles, in the untiring devotion of her child, who strove by every mark of affection to prove her appreciation of so good a mother; and it was pleasant to behold the two, in neat though humble garb, wending their way on Sunday to a neighboring church, or to listen in the evening at their door, when Emily read from the newspaper some stories of the great world that rolled its mighty tides of life beyond the narrow limits of a tenant-house court.

But, of late, the widow's health had been breaking, and it was plain that an existence of wintry labor and endurance would soon yield to the coming of that spring which blossoms beyond the grave; for consumption, with insidious power, was withering the mother's life, before the eyes of her child, and from the bed of suffering she now looked darkly forward. Her feeble fingers could no longer ply the needle, and her dim eyes seemed dazzled by the white cambric. Cold grew the widow's heart in foreboding for her daughter. But God had kept that daughter, thus far, and His Mightiness still overlooked her footsteps.

Blessed is the heart of the young, loving, and hopeful, even amid sorrow and gloom. When the widow's weak hands could no longer toil, the daughter's industry took the place of hers. School was resigned, and with it all the charms of school society, prized the more by Emily

because so unlike the surroundings of Foley's Barracks. Now, instead of tripping blithely away, with ready morning lessons, Emily hurried, though with no less blithe a footstep, to a hot, narrow back parlor, where, with half a dozen pale-faced girls, happy, like herself, to be employed, she plied the busy needle twelve hours every day, earning a scanty pittance by incessant work. But she hoped—toiled and hoped; for she was but a novice as yet, and flattered her young fancy with the prospect of soon ending her probationary apprenticeship, and becoming worthy to receive the wages of a finished workwoman. She knew not how many thousands, versed in all the mysteries of fashion's paraphernalia, had hoped unto despair, and sunk by the wayside to death, perhaps to shame. Well for Emily that she was yet hopeful and ignorant. Sorrow and knowledge of good and evil are learned soon enough in this world of ours.

Sorrow, indeed! when the milliner's apprentice was called away from her task, by a message from her mother, who, poor sufferer! had concealed from her the rapid progress which disease was making; choosing much rather to dwell upon every indication of favorable change! Sorrow, indeed! as the grey dawn of a wintry morning, struggling into the dim chamber, discovered the poor girl, after a night of watching, bowing herself, weeping, at her dying mother's bedside.

During that long night, while fierce snow-gusts were driving through deserted streets, the young girl had been kneeling, with hushed breath; sustaining with one slight arm the feeble head so soon to be at rest for ever; and

listening to the hard, dry cough and thick breathing which shook the laboring breast. Long and wearisomely had the hours dragged on, till now, in the early morning, the daughter resigned her clasp of the hot hand she had been holding, and with an anxious glance at the widow's closed eyes, rose from her bent posture, and drew the white curtain of the window. The coals were blackening in the grate, and Emily's limbs felt chilled and cramped. She shuddered as she looked out upon the great drifts of snow in the streets, and saw, above, how the house-smokes rose sluggishly upward from chimney-tops, as if half-congealed by the keen frost. Then, returning to the hearth, she gathered its few decaying embers together, essaying to rekindle the fire ; and as she did so, her mother stirred in the bed, and turned her face upon the pillow. Emily was by her side, in a moment, supporting the drooping head.

A history of grief was legible in the Widow Marvin's countenance, written out in sharp furrows and scored by worn lines ; poverty, sickness, the world's neglect, had stamped their separate impress ; but enduring patience, and the meekness that forgives, had mellowed all into gentle resignation, even though death's strange seal was already pressing on the pallid brow its awful *finis*.

"My Emily !"

Her daughter's arms twined about the widow's neck, her lips pressed the bony forehead, cold and clammy with the dews of dissolution. "Mother ! mother !" was all the poor girl could utter, her cheek growing ashy, and the blood shrinking to her heart.

"My child ! I am dying !"

"No, no, mother!—no! don't say so! Oh! you must not leave me!"

"My poor Emily!" murmured the widow, folding her daughter, with a convulsive effort, to her bosom. "I had hoped to be spared—a little longer; but His will, my child, must be done!"

Emily could not speak; she only bent her head upon the pillow, while agonized sobs broke incessantly from her breast.

"Oh! Heaven look down upon my child!" cried the widow, clasping her attenuated hands around Emily's neck. "God of the orphan! have pity upon her! Thou who temperest the wind to the shorn lamb! be her consoler and strength!"

"Mother! mother!"

"Pray with me, Emily!"

The broken accents of a dying orison quivered on the Widow Marvin's lips, mingled with her child's sobbing supplication. From that dim and cold room of Foley's Barracks, the murmurs of devotion arose, reaching far above minarets and cathedral towers, to the throne of Him in whom the widow hoped. When the last syllable trembled and rose solemnly, Emily lifted her cheek from the bosom where it had rested, and gazed through blinding tears upon her mother's face; but she beheld no light in the fixed eyes: naught but a smile—bright flicker of a departing spirit—upon the marble lip. She unclasped the thin arms that had enfolded her neck, and, as they fell inertly upon the bed, Emily knew that she was henceforth an orphan.

But, even in that moment, when the sense of irremediable affliction fell heaviest, and the unutterable idea of loneliness settled gloomily around her, the influence of a mother's dying prayer seemed to surround the child, as with sustaining wings of angels; its cadences, though hushed in death, still vibrated in her memory, but more like triumphal numbers now—the strains of an ascending seraph—than the broken whispers of a daughter of poverty, perishing amid the wilderness of a tenant-house.

Blessed be prayer for evermore! Though thoughtless scoffers, and cold reasoners upon subtle abstrusities, sneer at the offering of a sacrifice like this of words—though shrinking fatalists aver that prayer is powerless to unfix the laws of destiny—yet are they but fools in their icy philosophy! Prayer unburdens the heart, like the prophet's rod, cleaving men's rocky natures, till the waters of refreshing peace gush forth. Better wrest a cup of water from the parched lip of a desert wanderer—rather sever the cord by which a drowning victim essays to climb the toppling cliff above him—than dash from a mourner's breast the holy solace of an earnest prayer, or that soothing trust in the efficacy of adjuration which sustains the soul when all else crumbles, quicksand-like, beneath it!

A knock at the door startled the orphan, and rising, she opened it to a short, portly man, clad in a glossy suit of broadcloth, his head covered by a very shining hat, and his feet encased in patent-leather boots, with sandals bound over them. He held a gold-headed cane in one hand, and in the other a blank-book. His black satin vest was crossed by a thick gold watch-guard, and heavy

seals of the same material dangled from his fob. Altogether, the appearance of this visitor was unexceptionably respectable ; nevertheless, Emily's pale cheek grew whiter as she recognized him.

"Ah, miss ! Good morning ! Great snow last night ! horrid walking !" Saying this, the patent-leather boots, with sandals, were violently stamped upon the entry floor, to disengage the muddy snow that adhered to them.

"Please, Mr. Jobson—if you would call again," began the young girl.

"What, little lady—isn't your ma in ? Well, no matter ! I'll have a chat with *you !* I like to chat with you, you know," said the man, with a leering smile, as he familiarly tapped Emily under the chin, still stamping the patent-leather boots, with a loud noise.

"But, sir,"—began the orphan, and burst into tears that checked her further speech.

"You're always so neat and clean here, little lady—does one good to see it ! tenants are generally the filthiest people ! but your mother's the pattern of cleanness ! Yes, and industrious, too, is the widow. Dare say she's been out to her work an hour ago ! always punctual with her rent ! Never gives a bit of trouble ! There, now ! I'm tol-lol, and ready for a chat with you, Emily."

With these words, the portly man in broadcloth bustled into the apartment, past the weeping girl, and was about to seat himself complacently in the widow's vacant rocking-chair, when he chanced to cast his glance to the bed which stood in one corner, and there beheld a sight that

caused his apoplectic face to lose for a moment its usual scarlet tinge.

"What!—dead!" he cried, starting back, and almost falling over the chair.

A fresh sobbing burst from Emily, as the poor girl tottered towards the bedside, attested the certainty of her orphanhood.

"Bad business!—uncommon afflicting dispensation!" said the visitor, drawing out a red silk handkerchief, and rubbing his rubicund face, in much agitation. "When did it occur?"

"My mother has just gone!" answered Emily, looking up into the man's face, with an expression so desolate that it might have awakened the sympathy of a savage.

"Poor thing!" said the visitor, "I am really shocked—greatly shocked! So unexpected! Here one day, and gone the next. Such is life! Have you sent for anybody?"

"'Twas so sudden, sir—and last night the storm was so bad, I could not leave her, to go for Dr. Cannon! I had a mind to call Mrs. Dumsey, who lives on the second floor, front; but, indeed, I was afraid to leave mother even for a moment."

"Yes! Mrs. Dumsey—a very good woman!—pays promptly! By-the-by, miss, your mother was quite industrious—must have saved something—eh?"

"What, sir?" inquired Emily, seeming not to understand the remark.

"Laid by a little, to make you kind o' comfortable, I hope," pursued Mr. Jobson.

"Did Mr. Jobson mean that mother had money laid by?"

"That's it!—Hope so!"

"*We were very rich!*" replied the young girl, earnestly; as she opened a trunk near the bed, and drew forth a small purse of faded cotton; "not in money, Mr. Jobson—but in contentment! Here is the sum of our worldly wealth." As she spoke, Emily emptied the contents of her purse upon the table, before her visitor. It was not much—a double eagle would have paid dearly for the crumpled notes and silver that Mr. Jobson saw.

"Is that all?" he asked with emphasis. "About enough for funeral expenses!"

"And the *rent*, Mr. Jobson," rejoined Emily, as if she read the man's unspoken thoughts.

"O—miss—I beg! don't trouble yourself!—make your mind quite easy on that head. Any time, you know! We are old friends—eh, little lady?"

Jobson smiled, as he uttered this, in a manner that caused Emily to drop her eyes to the floor, while a sensation of terror crept through her frame.

"If you would be so good as to speak to Mrs. Dumsey, when you go down, sir," ——

"Certainly, miss; and anything I can do, you know," returned Jobson, approaching, and taking Emily's small fingers in his own. "I had a great respect for your mother, you know." He squeezed her hand, as he spoke, and patted the glossy ringlets that hung upon her white neck. "You'll find me a good friend, never fear."

"You'll not forget to speak to Mrs. Dumsey," said

Emily, shrinking from Jobson's touch, and anxious that he would depart. "She will help me, greatly."

"Yes, little lady," said the man, with a look more of admiration than of pity, upon the changing countenance of the orphan. Then, reluctantly turning away, he continued: "Always call on me, you know! Good-by! I'll be around soon again! I'm your best friend, you know."

Jobson then rubbed his crimson face with the handkerchief of similar color, and, with a bow and smile—both unheeded by the orphan, whose face had again sunk beside her mother's—stamped his patent-leather boots, sandals, and gold-headed cane out into the passageway, and thence down the narrow stairs. Emily breathed more freely when he had gone.

Mrs. Dumsey's room was a small one, with the inevitable dark, unventilated closet adjoining. It was kept tolerably clean, though four children occupied it, sleeping with their mother on a capacious feather bed, the relic of Mrs. Dumsey's better days, which she hoped to be able to leave, as an heirloom, to her eldest daughter. Mrs. Dumsey's offspring comprised three girls and one boy, the latter her youngest, very dirty, and a great favorite of his mother. He was eight years old, and his sisters were respectively, ten, twelve, and thirteen. The room which constituted their parlor and kitchen by day, and their bedroom by night, where the rickety old sofa-bedstead was disposed for their accommodation, had been the limit of their domestic experience, since infancy; for Mrs. Dumsey, after the Widow Marvin, was the next oldest tenant of Foley's Barracks. In that one small room—for the inner

closet was used as a sort of pantry, and receptacle for odds and ends—the mother had resided seven years with a husband, and after he had enlisted as a soldier, and died by disease and wounds in a Mexican hospital, had reared to their present age the four children left to her. A small stipend from government, in the shape of forty dollars per annum, the half-pay pension due to the widow of a soldier, assisted wonderfully in eking out her living, earned by watching as a nurse and assistant at funerals. Her three daughters were slatternly and ignorant, her darling Tommy a most malicious urchin, the terror of the tenant-house, on account of his multitudinous tricks, and herself a good-hearted, moralizing sort of a woman, slave to her children, and continually getting into disturbances with her neighbors on their account. Mrs. Dumsey stood at her door, as the gentleman in patent-leathers was descending to her landing.

"Morning, Mrs. Dumsey! Ah! there you are, with your nice family—Tommy and his fine sisters! Eh, Tommy," ——

"Speak to the gentleman, Tom! Don't you know Mr. Jobson?"

"O yes, Tommy, you know me, you know," said Mr. Jobson, making a pleasant grimace at the dirty-faced boy, who thereupon walked cautiously up to the gentleman, and planted a well-directed kick upon the instep of the patent-leather boot. Mr. Jobson uttered an exclamation of pain and anger, and raised his cane, at which motion Master Tommy set up a most ear-piercing howl, and took refuge behind the squat person of his mamma.

"Excuse him, Mr. Jobson; the poor child hasn't had his breakfast, and is cross."

"Yes, and I *want* my breakfast!" cried the boy, plucking at his mother's gown, and making indescribable mouths, under her arm, at Mr. Jobson.

"Here—you! Matilda, pacify Tommy!" said the mother, getting very red, and beckoning to her eldest daughter, who hereat approached, and seized her brother by his collar, upon which he kicked backward with fearful intent, but found his foot caught by his dexterous sister, who forthwith trundled him off in triumph to the pantry, where a succession of yells bore witness to her success in pacifying him. The remaining two girls stood staring at Jobson, and gnawing their hands at the same time. They were half-clad, their clothes ragged, and falling from their shoulders, but, like the eldest, they had pretty faces, and appeared healthy.

"Here's the rent, Mr. Jobson, all rolled up in half-dollars, legal money," said Mrs. Dumsey, who prided herself on her method of doing business according to law, a fact which no neighbor dared to dispute, as it was well known the good woman had more to do with gentlemen of the legal profession (through her pension matters) than any other person in Foley's Barracks.

"All in half-dollars, eh?" said Mr. Jobson, receiving the money, which he counted, with the remark, "though you're always correct, you know, Mrs. Dumsey," and then produced a ready-signed receipt from the book which he carried. "And now we're both correct!" he concluded.

"Mommy, she's a-pullin' my hair!" cried the heir of the family, screaming from the place of his captivity.

"It's a lie—I'm a-tryin' to comb it," was the sisterly response.

Another howl followed this contradictory remark, and then a brief conflict was heard, immediately after which Tommy appeared in flight, pursued by his sister, whose frock had been torn from neck to skirt in the struggle.

"O, I'm worried to death, as I'm a livin' woman, with them innocents!" cried Mrs. Dumsey, apparently much vexed. "You, Tom! I'll skin you! Matilda, why don't you pacify him?"

"Try it yourself, and see how easy it is," replied the daughter, and then sulked away in a corner; but was presently brought forward again, by an exclamation of surprise from her parent.

"Dead! you don't tell!—poor critter! and that g'rl, Emily, all alone! Gracious me! I must run up there, this very minute!"

"Do so, Mrs. Dumsey. No doubt, she's in great distress."

"Right straight away!" returned the neighbor; and, as Mr. Jobson, his boots, and cane, commenced to step towards another room, Mrs. Dumsey ran up stairs, followed by the three listening girls, with great clamor; while the unhappy Tom, forsaken by his relatives, threw himself upon the door-sill, and began a savage series of kicks against the wall, at the same time pealing forth a succession of aboriginal war-whoops, which presently brought all the surrounding tenants to their doors.

Mr. Jobson punctuated each step he took with a stroke of his iron-ferulcd cane upon the flooring, until he reached a room at the opposite extremity of the passageway, and there knocked with the golden head. A woman about twenty-five years of age, once undoubtedly handsome, but with marks of dissipation on her features, which were rouged and powdered thickly, opened the door to him.

"Ah !—morning !" said Mr. Jobson.

"Walk in !" responded the woman, testily, and with no mark of deference. "I suppose you're after the rent. Here, Freid !—the landlord !"

The last words were addressed to a man who stood in the middle of the room, clad in close-fitting flesh-colored shirt and tights. This man was very stout and muscular, his neck short and powerful as a bull's, his breast bulging and head small, covered with short, curly black hair, while a beard of the same description almost concealed his face. He was fixed, with legs astride, his arms extended, and sustaining a young girl, who balanced upon the wrist with one small white foot, while the other pointed, in a sort of aerial *pas*, to the ceiling. Mr. Jobson paused, as he beheld this spectacle, astonished both at the situation and surpassing loveliness of the *posturante*.

And well might he be surprised ; for certainly no Grecian sculptor ever fancied a more beautiful mould than that of this female child, scarce ten years of age, who, with no article of clothing upon her polished limbs but a gauze robe or petticoat, was practising some *pose* with the muscular fellow who sustained her. The tips of her left

taper fingers were just clasped by her companion's left hand, while the right held the toes of her extended foot. Her hair, which was of a pale golden hue, hung in thick-clustering ringlets upon her rounded shoulders ; her eyes, half-covered by long lashes, were yet sufficiently open to permit the lustre of a dreamy blue to contrast with the clear red and white of her complexion, and the full crimson of her pouting lips. Altogether, she might have been a model for some Catholic sculptor, picturing a childish saint, or newly-created angel, half-reclined on air. Mr. Jobson did not, of course, imagine all this poetic nonsense, but he could not help murmuring, as he looked—"What a doosed pretty girl, to be sure !"

The posturer lowered his arm, and his beautiful pupil alighted on the floor, with scarce the sound of a footfall, and, turning a pirouette, at the same time throwing a bold glance at the visitor, skipped through the open door of their dark bedroom. The posturer fixed a pair of sleepy eyes upon Mr. Jobson, and mumbled some words in broken English, which the agent appeared to interpret as a demand concerning the amount of rent due.

"Six dollars—in advance, you know ! you paid three weeks when you took the rooms, and now it's even months. Six dollars, if you please."

"What does he say ?" asked the athlete, turning to his female companion, and speaking in an odd mixture of English and some other dialect. The woman muttered something, that resulted in the production, on the part of the man, of an iron snuff-box, wherein were some greasy notes, which he handed to the woman. She then

tendered the required sum to Jobson, who smiled complacently, as he returned a receipt, and said :

"Hope you're nicely suited—everything satisfactory, mem? Like to make tenants comfortable, you know."

"Comfortable !" echoed the woman, with a short laugh. "In this den !"

"For the matter of that, mem," rejoined Mr. Jobson, rather tartly, "other people lives in this house."

"Lives !" responded the woman, with a sneer ; "better say, rots—dies—you'll hit it nearer ! What with filth, vermin, and smoke, it's enough to breed the pest at any time."

"Indeed, mem"—began Mr. Jobson, in an expostulatory tone ; but the woman cut him short, exclaiming—

"You've got your rent—what more d'ye want ?"

The agent hesitated, and cast a look towards the back chamber in which had vanished the lovely vision that a few moments since seemed to illume the dingy room ; but he met the posturer's sluggish eyes fixed on him, with a surly expression, and relinquished his half-formed intention of inquiring concerning the young girl. However, as if anxious to leave a favorable impression, he ventured, as he turned away, to say—

"Anything I can do, you know, to make you comfortable, you know," ——

But no reply was vouchsafed to this magnanimous offer on the part of Mr. Jobson, save, indeed, a decided slam of the door after his emerging form ; whereupon he marched away, with dignity much hurt, emphasizing his rising feelings by downward strokes of the gold-headed cane, to the

infinite terror of delinquent tenants tremblingly awaiting his advent in various quarters of the alarmed territory known as Foley's Barracks.

"Who the doose can that handsome child belong to?" soliloquized Mr. Jobson. "It can't be *hers*—though it may be *his!* Queer individuals, anyway, them model-artists!"

Chapter VI.

Mallory the Miser.

ASCENDING to the highest dwelling-floor of Kolephat College, through narrow pine-walled passages, the visitor would find a score of small apartments separated from the cockloft by a sort of ceiling, constructed of hemlock boards, with insterstices between each, through which not only the wind found access, but rain and snow-water, from the rickety shingle-roof above. In one of these wretched rooms, lying upon a coarse bed of straw in the corner, on the morning that succeeded the great snow-storm, was stretched the form of a woman, covered by a patched quilt and some ragged under-garments, her head supported by an old shirt-sleeve stuffed with the damp straw of the pallet. This woman's hair was long and quite grey, her features were haggard and flushed with fever, her arms and hands were bony, like a skeleton. She seemed to suffer greatly: her eyes were closed, and low moans proceeded incessantly from her compressed lips. Drops of water, oozing from the roof above, fell, with measured plash, upon the boards near the bed's foot, around which a wet space appeared, discoloring the dirty flooring. The ceiling and partitions of this upper story

were so rotten with decay, and pervious to the elements, that they momently shook and rattled, as the wind rushed gibbering through each forlorn passage.

There was another living being in this desolate tenant-room—a shivering, puny child, with scarce a shred of clothing on her limbs, whose face was marked by scrofulous blotches. This child's yellow hair was so tangled and matted, that it stood out in every direction from her face, begrimed with dirt and tears. More, indeed, like an elfish spectre than like a human child, did this little creature appear, as her sharp features and attenuated figure were disclosed in the morning light that struggled dimly through a side window, the principal glass of which had long since given place to boards, nailed over broken panes, or crushed hats stuffed between their fragments. Crouching on her knees at the fire-place, down which water mixed with soot was constantly dripping, this squalid child endeavored to ignite, with her feeble breath, a few shavings collected upon the hearth.

As the blaze flashed up, the little one started, hearing a staggering footstep without; and the next moment, the door was burst rudely open, and a drunken man reeled over the threshold, and fell heavily on the straw at the foot of the sick woman's bed.

"O! it's father!" cried the child, allowing the fire just kindled to die away, while she lifted her shrivelled arms, as if expecting a sudden blow. But the man appeared powerless to inflict injury, or even to help himself; his bloated face lay prone upon the floor, and his blood-shot eyes stared vacantly forward. Brutalized by

strong drink, he presently subsided into a lethargic slumber; and the child went on to kindle the few chips and shavings dispersed upon the damp hearthstone. Then, trembling all the while, with the chill wind that swept the room, as well as from terror, lest her besotted parent might awake, the spectral figure proceeded to boil some water in a lidless saucepan, placed upon the fire.

No inventory was needed to describe the furniture of this wretched attic room in Kolephat College. Besides the straw bed and its tattered covering, there were a broken table, or rather high stool, standing upon three legs, near the wall, a chair destitute of back, on which about an inch of tallow dip was stuck in its own grease, for lack of a candlestick; a broken basket, containing a few chips of wood, two or three earthen cups, and a black teapot, upon a shelf, and the saucepan, before-mentioned, upon the fire. These were the visible effects pertaining to that apartment, wherein a woman lay helpless with fever, and a man intoxicated to stupefaction.

The weird child, after watching the water till it boiled, now dragged the shattered chair to the wall, and, climbing upon it, reached her little hand upward for the teapot and cups. From one of the latter, she extracted a few pinches of a compound which had been purchased from Peleg Ferret's store, under the illusive impression that it was "tea," and, dropping it into the pot, proceeded to prepare her mother's breakfast.

It might have furnished a subject—if not for a painter, at least for a moralist—to observe the look of anxious

care with which the child measured out with her fingers the allowance of tea, to scan the busy expression of her sharp features, as she watched the process of steeping the beverage, and, finally, to mark her furtive glances, now at her moaning mother, now at the prostrate drunkard, while she took a fragment of bread off the shelf, cut some thin slices from it with a broken knife, and browned them at the scanty fire. So old her childish face, so strangely slow and measured were her motions, she seemed to be rather a dwarf woman than an infant of scarce six miserable winters—for summer, in the sense of life's enjoyments, she had never known.

When the dirty liquid, which the poor child fancied to be tea, had been duly prepared, and poured into one of the earthen cups, she softly approached her mother, and whispered that it was ready; and the sick woman, stirring painfully, received it from her hands. Here was another scene for preacher or painter to sketch: the sufferer upon the straw, raising with difficulty her trembling head from its wretched pillow—the weird-like child, striving with feeble arms to assist, and the strong man, who should have been helper and protector of both, lying dumb and senseless at their feet.

"Is *he* asleep?" murmured the woman, glancing uneasily at the prostrate drunkard.

"Yes, mother! he fell down, when he came in," answered the child, with a fearful look. "O, I do hope he won't wake up now."

The woman sighed, and put away the tea from her lips, with a nauseated look. "It's slops," she said.

"Dear me! the fire wouldn't burn, and there's no milk," replied the child, mournfully.

"And no money," rejoined the mother, bitterly.

"There's seven cents, mother, and I can go for milk, please. I'd gone before, but I was afeard you'd miss me."

"It's very dark, Moll," said the woman, looking towards the window.

"It's the snow—there was a big snow come in the night."

"Go for some milk—and see if you can pick up a few chips in the street, Moll."

"There's snow all over, mother."

"No matter, Moll—try!"

The woman turned away her head, and the wretched child took up an old hood from the floor, and placed it over her matted hair. The hood was her mother's, and Moll's poor face looked still more witch-like, peering out from it. Then, throwing a tattered and filthy shawl about her half-naked shoulders, she sat down to fasten her shoe, slipshod and broken at every side.

"'Deed, I might as well be barefoot," she muttered, in her odd manner, ruefully surveying the torn leather; but there was no help for the matter; and so Moll rose, and climbed to the shelf, where a sixpence and a copper were hidden under one of the cups. The silver she at once placed in her mouth, and, jumping from the chair, was about to depart, when her foot was grasped by the outstretched hand of her father, who had recovered from his stupor, or feigned sleep, and was eyeing her, with an ill-omened expression.

"I seen ye, Moll," muttered the man, with a drunken chuckle, as he detained the frightened child. "You was sly, but I seen ye."

"Let her go, Phil," cried the sick wife, half-rising from her bed.

"Stop up, ould woman! nobody's interferin' with you! Jes' you stop, ould woman!" replied the husband, speaking thickly, as he endeavored to raise himself on one hand, while with the other he held the now weeping child.

"Lie down, brute!" muttered the woman, angrily.

"Yes—you—sham sick, will ye?" cried the husband. "No go, ould woman—'tis no use! Moll! go for rum! It's a sixpence ye got—I seen it."

"Please, father! let me go for the milk, and some chips," pleaded the child, striving to get away.

"Rum—go for rum, I tell ye."

"There's no bottle, father."

"Old Fer—Ferret 'll lend—a bottle!" replied the drunkard. "Go—and ask him."

"O, dear father! mother is so sick, and I was goin' for milk!"

"Your mother!—shammin'—shammin sick, I tell you. Here, now!—gi' me the sixpence!"

"O, please, father, don't take it!"

"Gi' me it," cried the drunkard, twisting the child's ankle, as he dragged her back, till she fell, with pain, upon the floor. "Open yer mouth—I seen it."

The wretched child's mouth was forced open by her brutal parent, and the silver taken out. Then the ruffian, with a chuckle, released his grasp, and she fled,

sobbing, to the door. But her mother's sharp voice recalled her :

"Moll ! never you mind the drunken vagabone. Go for the chips, girl, and ask Ferret to trust you for a penn'orth o' milk."

"He'll not, mother. He said, last night, he was comin' for the rent."

"Rent ! ha, ha !" laughed the woman, bitterly. "Wish he may get it, the ould skin-flint !"

It was horrible to hear that laugh, from those lips twitching with feverish pain ; and to hear it echoed by the wretched husband, as he staggered to his feet, and leered vacantly at his partner.

"Vagabone—am I? vagabone—ould woman?" He swayed backward and forward, as he spoke, endeavoring to sustain his balance, and shaking his fist the while, by turns, at mother and daughter. Then, examining the sixpence, which he clutched between his fingers, he staggered to the door, and out upon the passage.

"He's gone !" cried the wife, striking her forehead, as if relieved. "Don't go yet, Moll !—maybe he'll fall and break his neck ! God forgive me for the wish !"

The sick woman and her weird child listened to the plunges and steps of the drunken man, as he descended the stairs, flight by flight, intent on satisfying his thirst for rum. What a "home" for human beings was this attic chamber of Kolephat College !

Hardly had the last vibrations of the drunkard's downward steps reached the listener's ears, than a new footfall sounded in the passage, and a knock was heard outside.

Moll opened the door, and admitted Mr. Peleg Ferret, who glanced around the room, eyeing its squalid appearance, and the half-famished features of its tenants, with a professional scrutiny. Obviously, the inspection was not productive of satisfaction, for he scowled at the frightened child, and asked, "Where's your father?"

"He went down stairs," answered the child.

"Ay! to pay his good friend Ferret a visit," added the woman; "to change his last sixpence for Ferret's poison, that has turned a hard-working, sober man into a drunken loafer."

"He'd better pay his rent," snarled Peleg.

"And what matters it to you, whether the penny comes first for rent or rum?" muttered the woman. "He and his are yours and the devil's, body and soul."

"Come, come, woman! none o' your abuse, or you'll pack off, sick or well! I don't keep a harbor for beggars. Your rent has been due now a fortnight, and I'm losing money every day."

"And Phil has been drunk in your shop every day, for the last month, Ferret! How many times did I beg and pray that you'd not sell him the liquor! It's the rent you want, is it?"

"Yes, and I'll have it, or you'll all march," said the agent, vindictively.

"Maybe, you'll sell my bed," muttered the woman, with a hollow laugh, as she kicked the loose straw that had broken through its dirty sack.

"We'll see, we'll see!" was the reply, as Peleg Ferret, frowning blackly, shook his head at his tenant, and left

the apartment. When he had disappeared, the woman sunk back, with closed eyes, in a deep swoon. Excitement and suffering had exhausted her to the last point, and she lay as one dead. Moll looked, and, with a sharp cry, ran to the bed, and threw herself upon her wretched mother's breast.

Meantime, the miserable inebriate, holding the sixpence in his clutch, had descended to the lower passages of Kolephat College, and thence, betaking himself to the street, reeled towards the Dutch grocery which divided neighboring custom with that of Peleg Ferret. It might be that the cold air, or the snow-heaps through which he staggered, somewhat sobered his senses, and brought some feeling of shame over his besotted mind; for he paused at the street-corner, and appeared to hesitate as to proceeding further. As he did so, a most singularly-shabby and forlorn object shuffled past him, in the direction of the tenant-house. It was an old man, withered and bent almost double with age or infirmities. His palsied head shook like that of a toy-mandarin upon some parlor mantel-shelf; and, as he tottered along, a dry, hacking cough shook his lean frame. The drunkard regarded him for a moment, with vacant look, and then more earnestly, as if some thought were forming in his muddled brain. "Ho, ho!" he chuckled to himself. "It's Mallory, the miser!"

The object of his remark kept on, with shuffling gait, to the entrance of Kolephat College; and, after gazing for a moment longer, the man Phil followed him, with somewhat steadier motion, till they both entered the

tenant-house. Within its dark entry, sound was a better guide than vision, to determine the direction of footsteps, and so Phil listened a moment, after he crossed the threshold, to hear the old man ascend the dingy stairs.

Slowly, pausing at each step, to take breath, and groaning at the difficulties of progress, the tottering miser groped upward, stretching out his shaking hands to feel the way, while Phil stepped closely behind, till the pair reached a landing on the fourth story, and the old man crawled towards the rear of the passage, reaching, at last, the door of his dark and narrow chamber. The drunkard, Phil, knew the locality, for he had seen its tenant enter it before; but he still kept close to the miser's heels, and arrived at the threshold as the latter crossed it, closing carefully the door behind him.

Phil appeared now to be recovered, in a great measure, from his drunken stupidity, and possessed with some crafty purpose suddenly conceived, for he crouched down in the murky entry, beside the old man's apartment, and essayed to catch a glimpse of the inmate through a crevice in the rotten panel.

It was a miserable apartment—more so, even, than that which the drunkard himself occupied above; for it was narrow and dingy, with hardly room to turn between the truckle-bed that formed the old man's resting-place, and the small hearth, with a broken stove between the jambs. There was no fire in this stove; but the miser had brought home coals and cinders, scraped from some ash-heap, and now emptied them on the floor, out of a filthy handkerchief. Stooping then, groaning unceasingly, he

placed a few sticks in the stove, and essayed to ignite them by the aid of a match which he took from the fire-place. Presently, the sticks took fire, and flashing up, cast their light upon the withered features of this wretched dotard. They were very forbidding to look at: lips shrivelled and drawn in at the corners; gums yellow and almost toothless; nose hooked and chin protruding; eyes, furtive and restless in their glance, roving about the apartment, scanning every shadow, and twinkling like fire-flies under the bony forehead—a portrait of distrust, fretfulness, and fear.

The outer garb of this old man consisted of a shabby brown coat, full of patches of other colors, and fringed with rags upon skirt and sleeves. Instead of buttons, a strand of rope confined it about his withered figure, and held up, at the same time, the waistbands of thin trowsers, likewise patched and tattered. A pair of rusty boots, rent in divers places, shod his feet, and were bound about by pieces of bagging that served as leggings to cover the broken leather. An old blue cotton shirt, that had probably covered his body during months, was partially visible on his breast, and his grey hair was covered by a fur hat, once white, but long ago blackened with street mud, from which the dotard had picked it, when his last head-gear fell to pieces from rottenness. Such was Mallory the Miser, who now, after causing his rickety stove to emit puffs of smoke till the miserable apartment was filled with it, rose to his feet, and shuffled slowly towards the door, still watched by Phil the drunkard from without. Pausing, as he reached it, he

stretched out his talon-like fingers, grasping a wooden bar that stood in the corner, and, fixing this like a stanchion against a panel (for the rust-eaten lock had long been useless), listened a moment attentively, as though hearing a voice, and then tottered to his single window, letting down a smoke-stained newspaper that served for its curtain. This done, he crept, still slowly and stealthily, to the fire-place, and sat down, with his back towards the door at which Phil was watching his movements. Now came the drunkard's moment of interest; for he beheld the old man remove a brick from the side of the hearth, disclosing a dark recess, from which he drew out a broken flower-pot, his palsied hands shaking the vessel, and causing its contents to strike together, with the peculiar chink of metal. It was gold—bright, yellow gold—the god of the old man, whose eyes glistened with snaky light, as he glanced nervously around him, clasping his two hands over the flower-pot, and crouching upon it, like some unclean fowl brooding over its young.

One by one! chink, chink! while smoke puffed up, unheeded, from his broken stove, there the dotard squatted in the hollow of his wretched hearth, counting his hidden treasure—one! two! three!—chink! chink! chink! Tottering, drivelling old miser! hour after hour, day and night, his only solace has been to gloat, with rheumy eyes, over the hoarded accumulations of a life unblest by affection, barren of sympathy, desolate and destitute to the last degree; his only solace to caress, and embrace, and sleep with his darling gold; yes, sleep with his idolized, his adored; for a bundle of straw, at the fire-place

jambs, hard by the nook that held his treasure, had been the only bed of Mallory the Miser, during half a score of years. There had he stretched so long his withered bosom, close to his well-beloved.

And now, bowing down, he hugged the clay vessel that contained the joy of his existence. Starving in body and soul, with the grave yawning under his dim vision, the ancient miser clasped to his dry heart the bride of his dotage, his shining fiend-wife, born from yellow earth.

Phil, as he beheld the scene before him, started back, surprised, and comparatively sobered, at the unexpected sight. He had known that Mallory was penurious, and was aware of the reputation he had acquired, among fellow-tenants, of having scraped together some wretched savings, thereby gaining the soubriquet of "miser;" but the sight of a pot of bright gold pieces was something totally unexpected by the drunkard, and had the effect of a cold shower-bath upon his faculties. True, the impulse that had prompted him to follow the old man up stairs, was one which looked for the discovery of some mystery like this, but the extent of Mallory's amassings confounded the spy completely, so that some time elapsed, after his first glimpse at the flower-pot, before he ventured to apply his eye once more to the narrow crevice in the panel. As he did so, he saw, much to his dismay, that the miser had arisen suddenly, after concealing his treasure, and was now close to the door. In another instant, his withered hands had removed the bar, and Phil, ere he could balance himself, fell forward over the threshold.

"Thieves! help! murder!" screamed the old man, as

he fell back upon the floor ; while Phil rolled over him, and struggled to his feet. A fancied noise startling the wretched dotard, as he counted his money, he had hastened to the door, after hastily concealing the pot, and Phil's body, pressing against the panel, caused it to give way at the moment Mallory's hand was shifting to a securer angle the bar that served for fastening. The abrupt intrusion, overthrowing his feeble frame, did not, however, deprive him of his voice, which continued to cry for help.

"Curse ye !" muttered Phil, as he grasped the miser's arm, lifting him to his feet. "What are ye screechin' for ? Who's harmed ye, Mallory ?"

"O—it's you, Philip—Mr. Keeley," said the miser, somewhat relieved, as he recognized the countenance of a neighbor, whom he had often encountered in the passage-way of the tenant-house ; but he still trembled with alarm, for he had regarded Keeley as a suspicious character, and the latter's looks and position, at this moment, were not at all in his favor.

"I was comin' to pay ye a visit," said the drunkard, with a grim smile ; and the miser fancied he beheld him glance curiously towards the fire-place.

"It's a poor place you've come to, Mr. Keeley," responded the old man, uneasily.

"Beggars mustn't be choosers," replied Phil, with a twinkle of his eye ; for his cunning had already pointed him a course of proceeding. "I'd be askin' a favor, if ye plaze, Mallory."

"Of me ?" cried the miser, twitching his head to one side, and affecting to laugh.

"An' who else, Mallory? Sure, it's the poor that knows how to help the poor; and the likes of us is poor enough, Mallory."

"That's true! it's a hard world!" said the miser, in a whining tone.

"An' so I'll make bowld wid ye, Mallory. Lind me a goold piece, to pay Ferret the rint that's doo." Phil said this with a leer that was unmistakable in its meaning, and the old man grew ghastly pale.

"What do you mean?" he gasped, as the drunkard's crafty eye fell upon him. "I've no money, avick! I'm a poor man, like" ——

"It's a lie, Mallory! Give me a goold piece, I say! an' be neighborly, for onst in yer life." As he uttered this, Phil placed his back against the door, and carelessly stooped, picking up the heavy wooden bar that had secured it. There was a strange expression settling over the man's features that boded no good to the miser; and the latter retreated as he encountered it.

"What do you mean to do, Mr. Keeley?" he asked, in a terrified whisper.

"Hark to me, Mallory. There's a sixpence—divil a coin have I but that—an' I *know* ye have plinty. Up stairs, now, is my wife, maybe dyin', and the child Moll, without a bit or sup. I'm a drunkard, they say, and spind all I make at the dram-shop; an' it's thrue; but, Mallory, I'm no miser."

The old man cowered under the singular gaze that was fixed upon him, shrinking back towards the fire-place, like one of those grotesque gnomes that are fabled to guard

the hidden treasures of earth, in deep caves. He felt that his long-concealed secret was known to Keeley, and that the latter was resolved upon some means, desperate or otherwise, to obtain the whole or a portion; but he could not bear the thought of relinquishing a single coin.

"I'm a poor man," he whimpered.

"You lie, Mallory! you've goold in the pot; and by all the saints, I'll have it," cried Phil. "Now, fair means or foul, ould man! It's not the gallus Phil Keeley the outlaw's afraid of! Stan' by, Mallory!" With these words, he fixed the bar against the door, and advanced towards the fire-place.

But the imminence of the danger, to which his treasure was exposed, served to inspire the miser with new resolution. No sooner had Keeley left the door, than the old man darted to possess himself of the wooden bar, and, as the robber stooped and displaced the brick which concealed the gold, he flung himself forward with all his feeble force, and dealt a blow at his head. Phil had grasped the prize, and was rising, when the weapon descended, grazing his forehead, and striking the flower-pot, which it dashed to fragments, scattering the golden contents over hearth and floor, and the dirty straw of the bed. Then, like a wild beast robbed of its young, the miser flung himself on Keeley, clutching his arms and endeavoring to reach his throat; following, at the same time, with straining glance, the coins that rolled beneath their feet. The robber defended himself a moment, and then became the assailant, dealing a blow upon the old man's forehead, which dashed his feeble frame to the floor,

where he lay still for a moment, and then threw himself wildly about, striving to collect his scattered golden pieces. Phil, too, who now began to feel his brain again whirling with excitement, gathered up those which lay nearest to his feet, and sprang for the door—the miser in vain attempting to stop him.

"Bad cess to you, Mallory!" cried the drunkard. "I'll have what I got, an' no thanks to you, murtherin' ould miser that ye are!" And the next moment, his retreating steps shook the stairs, as he unsteadily descended.

Mallory did not halloo, or call for help, for he dreaded too much the exposure of his hoardings to the eyes of other tenants, or the avaricious Peleg Ferret; and the consideration of this fear on the miser's part had emboldened Phil Keeley to the theft—though, indeed, it is doubtful whether, in his half-drunken state, the latter thought at all of the consequences of his assault. As it was, however, Mallory was now intent only on securing what was left of his treasure; and, though his head was bleeding from a severe contusion received in falling, he managed to crawl to the door and fasten it, once more, with the stanchion that had served him for a weapon. Then, dragging himself on hands and knees over the floor of the room, he peered into every crevice, raked the straw with his talon fingers, and counted and recounted, piece by piece, the gold which he gathered up. When all this was done, he raised from the middle of the hearth one of its flat bricks, and revealed a rusted tin measure, filled to the brim with coins of various hues, to which he added those preserved from Keeley; first wrapping them in a piece of dirty flan-

nel. Then, replacing the stone, he dragged his wretched litter over it, quite behind the stove, and sat down, moaning bitterly, and rocking himself to and fro.

Was it a problem that he revolved in the brain confined by that yellow, bony forehead? Did he ask himself if justice had been done upon him by the thief who pilfered his useless gold? Did he arraign Eternal Wisdom, because he had lost so much of his golden comfort in the terrible desert of his life? And might not human judgment reprove him, saying that himself was cruel and inhuman to hoard such treasure, while hundreds starved and died in the tenant-house, above and beneath him? Ah! not the miser of Kolephat College, but the great city, and the mighty world without, must answer that.

Chapter VII.

The Brown-Haired Boy.

LEAVING the drunkard's wretched wife and daughter to their desolate communion, Mr. Peleg Ferret descended from the attic of Kolephat College, treading the devious passages and mouldering stairways, till he reached the door of a front room upon the third floor, at which he rapped sharply. It was opened by a girl, apparently about twenty-eight years of age, whose cheeks were very pale, and eyes sunken. She curtesied, as the agent appeared, and invited him to enter, proffering, at the same time, a chair.

"Don't trouble yourself, miss," said Mr. Ferret. "Business before pleasure! I've just called to"—and he sat down, fingering his leather-covered book.

"The rent," interrupted the girl, with a faint smile. "I am glad it is ready; you will find it correct, I think." She handed him some bank notes, pinned together, which he scanned closely.

"Ye-es! all right!" said he, holding one of the bills to the light. "No offense, but there's counterfeits around; and 'a wise precaution is the parent of security.'"

"I received it from"—began the tenant, trembling

violently, lest the agent should discover something wrong. She was a thin, fragile creature, with hands transparent and attenuated. Always, after every sentence she uttered, a dry attempt to cough, or to clear the throat, followed, denoting pectoral disease.

"Guess it'll do!" said the agent, placing the bills in his wallet, and staring at the girl. "Business good, ma'am? Plenty to do?—heh?"

"I'm pretty well supplied now," answered the tenant.

"That's right. Work brings money, and money meets bills. Short payments, long friends—heh, miss?"

"I suppose so," returned the young woman, not knowing what else to say.

"Had a death last night," pursued the agent. "Woman on the same floor."

"A death, sir!"

"Yes!—new tenant—sewing-woman, like yourself—left a little child, and owed two weeks' rent. Hard case!"

Mr. Ferret rose, as he said this, and moved towards the door, allowing his hearer to determine in her own mind whether the two weeks' indebtedness of her late fellow-tenant for rent, or the payment of a greater debt to nature, constituted what he termed a "hard case."

"What did the poor woman die of?" timidly inquired the girl.

"Pleurisy—or consumption, the coroner said. Most of 'em die o' that!" answered the agent, as he nodded, and went out, leaving his tenant standing in the middle of the floor, her small hands pressed against her side, and the short, hacking cough checking her breath.

"Most of them die of *that!*" she repeated, as the door closed. "Yes—yes, indeed! and I, too, am dying!"

Murmuring these words, she sank into the chair which Ferret had occupied, and, bowing her head upon her hands, wept silently, while thick sighs broke from her heaving bosom.

The room tenanted by this young seamstress was of the pattern of most of the rooms in Kolephat College, with all their dinginess and close-contracted dimensions; nevertheless, it was clean and orderly, and possessed some certain air of comfort. Near the fire-place, in which a few coals were burning, stood a small walnut-wood stand, whereon lay a half-finished shirt, with the needle sticking in it. The room was cold, for it was accessible to every blast, by many crevices in the floor and doors; but its curtained window, and a thin carpet, together with a few framed prints upon the walls, made it seem to be more furnished than the generality of apartments in the tenant-house.

The sewing-girl did not long yield to the grief which had suddenly impressed her, for the consciousness of duties to be performed recalled her to herself, and she drew nearer to the little stand by the grate, resuming her needle-work, and bending low, as if to hide from consciousness the tears that gathered upon her pale cheeks. Thus she went on in silence, her fingers becoming cramped and cold, but plying their task, fast and deftly, over the rows of stitching, until, at length, as in very weariness, the cambric slipped from her relaxed hands, and fell to the floor, her breath the meanwhile growing audible, and her

left hand clasping her side, as if to repress a sudden spasm of pain. Some sound, however, seemed to startle her, and rising, she moved to the inner chamber, where was her bed, covered by a blanket and neat quilt, from under which appeared the rosy face and open eyes of a boy—an innocent face, with brown hair clustering round the forehead. Bending over this child, the young girl pressed his cheek with her lips, a half-checked sob breaking from them; whereat the little one stretched out his hands.

"Sister Margery!" he said, folding his arms around her neck. "Good mornin'! Did you hear me call you?"

"Yes, dear. Are you pretty well, Harry?" she asked, patting his glowing cheek.

"Real well, sissy! Must I get up now? Is it school-time?"

"I fear you cannot go to school to-day, dear Harry," she replied. "There has been a great snow, and the streets are all blocked up."

"Then, I may stay home and play with you, sister! O, I'm so glad!" exclaimed the child, clasping his hands.

"Will you lie still a little while, dear? Are you very hungry?"

"I'm *pretty* hungry, Margery; but I can wait. You're sewing, ain't you?"

"Yes, dear!"

"And you were sewing 'most all night. I heard you cough, and was so sorry."

"Darling!—was you?" cried the poor girl, throwing herself upon the bed, and kissing the boy again, while her

unrestrainable tears gushed out afresh. "O! heaven! must I leave this child?" she murmured; for the thought that her own life was ebbing pressed fearfully upon her mind.

"Who leave?—you ain't going away, sissy, are you?"

"No, dear child!—no, no!" cried Margaret. "Not from you, Harry."

"Never, sissy—never?"

"No, dear Harry!"

"O! what a darling sissy you be!" cried the little one, coaxingly, as he put up his dimpled mouth to receive the convulsive kiss which Margaret imprinted.

"Now, dear! lie very still!"

"Yes, Margery."

Once more the seamstress returned to her work, and plied the needle busily for a half-hour longer, till the task which she had toiled upon day and night was at length finished, and folded away upon the table. Then, unheeding the pain in her side, or the laboring tightness of her chest, she began to sing merrily, as, placing a few more coals upon the fire, and preparing a basin of warm bread and milk for Harry's breakfast, she contented herself, as often before, with a crust, or cracker, and glass of sweetened water.

This was the daily life of one tenant of Kolephat College, and, perhaps, the least painful phase of that monstrous existence. Had Peleg Ferret entered at the moment when, singing snatches of an old ballad, his tenant romped with the brown-haired boy, eating his porridge, that apothegmatic individual had surely deli-

vered some saw concerning "a merry heart;" but Peleg Ferret would have divined but faintly the sewing-girl's inner being. He would scarcely have credited the fact, of which herself was conscious, that for years she had been daily wearing away her young life, drying up her heart-springs, searing her brain with the slow agony of neglect, privation, and unceasing toil. Peleg Ferret would never suspect that those light song-words smothered the inner sobbings that bewailed a blighted heart, lying in her bosom, like a rose trodden in the dust, but fragrant still with sweetness kept alive by the watering of constant tears. Peleg Ferret could never imagine that his tenant's lonely hours were clouded by memories and fears—memories stirring the bitterness of the past, and fears shadowing the future of that brown-haired boy, whose only protection in the wide world was a seamstress—one of that class of whom the agent had carelessly said, "Most of 'em die o' consumption!"

But many an hour had Margaret wept, many a night watched, while the infant Harry slept, and sang at his awakening. Often had she put her last morsel of bread to his lips, when her own fast had not been broken through the weary day. Thus had her young existence wasted, like the oil of her midnight lamp.

Wasted! said I? Ah, no! For up, far up, in the bright, eternal home of angels, a pure sisterhood await the coming of that patient martyr of the world's neglect. Holy eyes will light up the darkness of her pathway—soft whisperings of love welcome her to the communion of kindred saints! Yet, a little while, O suffering one! and

the goal will be attained. Happiness abides beyond the portals of an early grave.

The seamstress feels that death is nestling near her heart—death, with dove-wings, shedding peace from their dark plumage. Gladly would she lie down from earthly toil; but the thought of her brown-haired brother is the link that binds her to the dreary task. For him she weeps—for him she prays, to the God of the poor and fatherless.

"Margery! I do so love you," said the child, as he stood beside her knee, while she smoothed his wavy locks. "Ain't you good-hearted, sissy?"

"Do you think so, Harry?"

"'Deed I do. When I'm a man, I mean to take care of you, and not let you sew a bit, Margery—'cause it hurts your side, and makes you cough."

"When you're a man? That'll be a long time, Harry! What else will you do, dear?"

"Have a sled!" answered the boy, quickly, as the thought of snow in the streets suddenly crossed his young fancy. "O, I wish I had a sled now."

"Poor child!" murmured the seamstress; adding earnestly: "But you would not go and slide, with all the rude boys in the court, Harry?"

"No, indeed," answered the boy; "but I'd draw you, Margery, when you wanted to ride."

Such prattle was Margery's sole comfort; but was it not much? she often asked herself; ought she not be thankful ever to toil, thus sweetly repaid by the dear affection of her baby brother?

The little fellow finished his breakfast, and ran to look at the snow, piled upon chimneys and roofs visible from their window; and Margery was preparing to arrange her remaining work, when a sudden cry, shrill and piercing, resounded from the passage-way outside, and at the same moment a noise was heard, as of shuffling feet. The seamstress hastened to the door, and, opening it, beheld two men carrying a rough, pine coffin towards the rear of the entry. The remark of Ferret, concerning a death on the previous night, now recurred to her recollection, and for an instant a sickness at the heart paralyzed her motions; but the next moment, she heard the shrill cry again, and beheld a child standing at an open door, some few rooms distant, and apparently struggling in the grasp of a policeman. Yielding to a sudden impulse, she crossed her threshold, and hurried after the coffin-bearers, who entered the door at which the child was screaming.

"What is the matter, sir?" inquired she, of the policeman, who seemed endeavoring to restrain the grief of the little girl, rather than to coerce her movements.

"Well, ma'am, the poor thing takes it hard, you see! Her mother is dead, and the little 'un's afeard they'll take her to Potter's Field, she says!"

"They sha'n't—they sha'n't!" cried the child Fanny; for it was she, who now, excited almost to hysterics from her night's watch and abstinence from food, had completely abandoned herself to despair.

"Hush! they're not a-goin' to hurt your mammy," said the policeman, soothingly. "You see, ma'am," he continued, addressing Margery, "she's a little queer, like.

Ain't used." Strange remark! as if the orphan could get accustomed to such bereavements.

"My poor child!—come to me! Let me talk to you," said Margery, in a low voice, that seemed to exert an influence over Fanny, who, released by the policeman, hesitatingly approached the seamstress, looking up, with tearful eyes into her face.

"Will you tell the men not to take my mother to Potter's Field?" she asked, earnestly, her lips remaining parted, in anxious expectation of the response.

"Who told you, dear, they would take your mother there?" asked the seamstress. The policeman rejoined:

"Ye see, ma'am, nobody knows the woman, it seems. She's not been a tenant long, and there ain't no friends o' the family, like—and so, you see, the 'Guardians' has charge of sich cases."

"I understand," murmured Margery; and the reflection occurred to her, for the first time, "Where shall *I* be buried?" At the same moment, her rapid fancy pictured a scene, perhaps not distant, when she might be the dead and friendless woman, and her orphan brother the despairing child.

"The poor thing is afeard of the men, like, that Mr. Ferret sent for, to box up the mother, and take her to the almshouse."

"And this child—what is to become of her?"

"The Governors, on the Island, I suppose," returned the policeman—"they has charge of orphans."

Margery stooped, and looked at the weeping child, and pressed her lips on the poor forehead, where a mo-

ther's dying kiss had lingered last. As she did so, a new voice was heard at a few yards' distance, and the form of a negro appeared, emerging from the narrow staircase, and sustaining with his outstretched arm the slow footsteps of an old gentleman, attired in a shabby camlet cloak and broad-brimmed hat.

"Bless, me, Samson! it is very dark, surely, for a dwelling-house!"

"Sartain sure, Massa Granby! Dis are a tenant-house, not a dwelling-house, massa!"

The two had now stepped upon the passage-floor, and were at once attracted by the sight of the group collected at the open door; for, in the room beyond, they could see a rough coffin resting on the bare floor.

"What's wanting?" inquired the policeman, advancing towards the new-comers

"A Mr. Ferret—isn't that the name, Samson?—the owner or agent of this building."

"He's in the house, somewhere about," answered the policeman, while Margery shrank back into the shadow, soothing the orphan Fanny, who clung to her with an instinct of confidence. At this moment, too, the voice of Harry called for his sister, and the little figure appeared running towards them.

"A poor woman died here this morning, or last night?" interrogated Mr. Granby.

"In that room—there's her child. Are you a friend?" asked the policeman, scanning the old camlet cloak with a glance that seemed to indicate his impression that so rusty-looking a friend might be of very little service.

"I trust I am a friend of the unfortunate, always," replied Mr. Granby. "That is her child, you tell me!" he continued. "Pardon me, madam," addressing Margery, "did you know the poor deceased?"

"No, sir. I but a little while since heard of her death —last night."

"This must be the little girl, Samson," affirmed Mr. Granby. Then, very much to the surprise both of Margery and the policeman, he stretched out his hand to the child, and said, in an assuring tone—

"Come hither, little Fanny, and tell me if you were out in the storm, last night?"

Fanny looked wonderingly at the old gentleman, and burst into tears again.

"I went for Robert," she murmured, "before mother died!"

"And I have promised your friend Robert," said Mr. Granby, lifting a fold of his camlet cloak, to wipe a tear that started suddenly to his eye, "that your mamma should not be buried in Potter's Field."

The last words were uttered thickly, for the old gentleman's emotion interfered with his voice; but Fanny understood them, and, with a loud cry, sprang away from Margery's side, and fell at the feet of Mr. Granby.

"Dear me, Samson! lift her up!" cried the master, much affected, and not a little frightened, as the girl remained without motion on the floor. But the seamstress had already darted forward, and raised the poor orphan, whose head fell slackly backward, as she did so; revealing the countenance pallid and the eyes closed in insensibility.

No wonder, indeed, that the infant had fainted; for the endurance of her young soul and body had been taxed to its uttermost.

"Poor, dear little one!" exclaimed the old gentleman. "Very likely, famished, too!"

"Berry like, indeed," echoed Samson.

"I will lay her on my bed," said Margery, quickly, and lifting the puny form in her arms. "It is just there, sir—where the door is open."

In a moment more, the orphan was laid quietly in the sewing-girl's bed, while Margery bathed her forehead with camphor, used often for her own aching brow. Mr. Granby and Samson, with the policeman, conferred together, meantime, in the outer apartment; the result of their colloquy being the sending for Peleg Ferret, and his issuing of instructions to the coffin-bearers to permit the corpse to remain for the present undisturbed by removal. This accomplished, Mr. Granby applying a handkerchief to his eyes, declared that he felt better, and that he was glad he had come to see a tenant-house.

Chapter VIII.

Noon at the Death-Bed.

THE noon-day sun, shining coldly into Emily Marvin's chamber, beheld her with heart uplifted still to the Father of Orphans, whilst the folded hands of her mother, clasped closely within her own, seemed, as they rested on the marble breast, to be a link between dead and living, even as the unuttered prayer was a union of earth with heaven.

Mrs. Dumsey had, with kind officiousness, relieved the sorrowing daughter of the first necessary preparations for that saddest of all duties, the burial of a parent. Administering such neighborly consolation as was within her power, she had already laid out the corpse upon its humble couch, smoothing the thin hair beneath a white cap, and arranging the worn limbs, in the last habiliments of mortality. She now entered, accompanied by a cadaverous-looking lad, who held a spring tape-measure in his hand, which he drew out and let slip, with a jerk, to show his nonchalance, as he glanced from the body to Emily.

"It's the undertaker's assistant," whispered Mrs. Dumsey, taking the girl's trembling hand, and leading her

gently from the bed to her mother's arm-chair, while the white-faced boy began, in a business-like way, to take the dimensions necessary for the selection of a coffin, pausing, at each stretch of his tape, to set down a figure, at the same time slowly turning his head towards his right shoulder, to catch a glimpse of Emily's face; all the time whistling, just audibly, like heavy breathing.

"It's a dispensation," said Mrs. Dumsey, wiping her eyes with a white and blue handkerchief, and sitting down beside the orphan, still holding her cold hand. "I'm often called on quite distressing occasions; an' I've got a feelin' heart, Miss Marvin, though I says it myself, miss; and I always says, says I, on sich occasions—it's a dispensation."

Emily made no reply, and the day-nurse went on with her well-meant method of administering comfort, by remarking, in a decided tone, that, "We're all mortal critters, and liable to go," at which declaration, the sepulchral assistant looked over his shoulder, gave a sideling glance, and continued his ventriloquial whistle.

"A nuss sees a deal o' sufferin' and trials," pursued Mrs. Dumsey. "Though I says it myself, as oughtn't to speak o' oneself, seein' as self-praise don't go a great ways, but people that knows *me*, knows I speak what's true, and no lie—a nuss like me, goin' about, sees an orful amount of human sufferin's."

Emily nodded her head, only half-listening to the good woman's words; and Mrs. Dumsey, encouraged by the reflection that she was comforting her distressed neighbor, went on, in the same strain, till the undertaker's agent

had finished his task, and, turning from the bed-side, approached them, leering stupidly.

"Are you talkin' to that g'rl?" he asked, jerking his yellow chin toward Emily. "Mighty little *she* hears—been a-faintin' this half-hour."

Mrs. Dumsey bent forward, scanning the young girl's face, which drooped against the chair-back.

"Dear me!" she cried, greatly agitated, "she's off, sure enough! Heart alive! why didn't you tell me, young man?" And, hastily supporting Emily, the nurse began to rub her head and hands.

"Quick! get some water!" she exclaimed. "Run, lad!"

"I ain't a errand-boy!" responded the yellow-faced individual, with a snap of his tape-spring. "You're a nuss, ain't you? 'Tend to your business, and I'll 'tend to mine." And resuming his sepulchral whistle, he sauntered leisurely out.

"Was there ever!" ejaculated Mrs. Dumsey, amazed at the stripling's lack of feeling. "Here, you! Matil-da!" And she stamped her foot upon the floor, to attract some member of her family, who occupied the room beneath. "Poor, unfort'nate critter! The dispensation has overcome her, an' she's gone clean off." Then, with renewed vigor, she beat and rubbed the hands of her fainting charge, alternately pounding with her foot, and screaming at the top of her voice—"Ma-til-da!—Hen-ri-et-ta!—Lau-ra J-a-ne!" the sponsorial appellations, respectively, of her three interesting daughters. But no response came to her outcries; and, at length, in great excitement,

she withdrew her arm from around the fainting girl, placed her in a reclining position on the chair, and then hurried frantically out of the room, and down stairs to her own quarters, whence, in a moment afterwards, a succession of yells arose, proceeding from the throats of all her innocents, knocked desperately to right and left. This domestic retribution accomplished, Mrs. Dumsey seized a bottle of hartshorn, and violently retraced her steps upward.

But what was the astonishment of the worthy nurse, on reaching the threshold of the death-chamber, to behold within, standing in the middle of the floor, with eyes fixed wonderingly upon the fainting orphan's face, a young man, clad in fashionable garments, and wearing a look of gentility entirely at variance with the atmosphere of Foley's Barracks. He appeared to have just paused, as if himself transfixed at the spectacle before him; but the approach of Mrs. Dumsey aroused him from his contemplation.

"Beg pardon, madam!" he said, lifting his hat. "I have intruded, I fear, on your apartment; but" ——

"It's not *my* apartment, sir!" said the nurse, undecided whether to be displeased or not, as the young gentleman's demeanor was so respectful. "It's *hers!*" She pointed, in saying this, at the bed on which lay the rigid form of the dead. The stranger started, uttering an exclamation of surprise.

"It's poor Widow Marvin, sure enough!" cried the nurse. "If you was a friend of the family, you know'd as good a critter as ever lived on the face of this ere canopy. And her poor darter's een'most gone herself! Laws me!

what am I thinkin' about?" she continued, running to Emily's side, and beginning to apply her hartshorn liberally.

"I trust you will pardon my intrusion!" resumed the young gentleman, with an inclination of his head. "I am extremely sorry! I was looking for Mr. Jobson, who, I learned, was in the building, and by accident, I—I" ——

"O, no harm's done!" said Mrs. Dumsey, greatly won by the stranger's deferential manner to herself. "Mistakes will happen, we all know, sir! Mr. Jobson was to see me this mornin', early—always comes early to me, as he knows Mrs. Dumsey is a punctooal woman all her born days." This information was given in a subdued tone, while the operation of bathing Emily's forehead went steadily on. "Mr. Jobson's about the house somewhere," concluded Mrs. Dumsey. "They've not *all* paid yet, *I'll* warrant." This was said with a consciousness that, whatsoever might be the delinquencies of other tenants of Foley's Barracks, she, Mrs. Dumsey, was entirely clear of Mr. Jobson's books.

The stranger lingered a moment longer, glancing at the bed and at Emily, and evidently anxious to prolong the conversation; but the duration of the orphan's swoon had now begun to alarm her attendant, who redoubled her restorative measures. At the same time, the entire family of Mrs. Dumsey, including the infant Tommy, presented themselves in force at the door of the apartment, at which fatal apparition the gentleman, bowing low to their mother, backed himself out, his eyes still riveted on the insensible maiden.

And truly, at this moment, to an admirer of statuesque beauty, the drooping form of Emily, as it reclined, half relieved against the chair-back, half supported by Mrs. Dumsey's arm, presented a beautiful study. The nurse had ceased those approved modes of proceeding, involved in clapping the palms of the hands and shaking the arms, and was now gently bathing the pallid forehead with her usually infallible hartshorn; and the orphan's face lay, death-like, against her breast. White, motionless, and lovely, the milliner's apprentice appeared more like modelled marble than living clay; for her lips were bloodless, and, save the long-fringed eyelids, heavily pendant, and the clustering curls upon her neck, both face and bust seemed sculptured out in strange and hueless immobility.

"Go down this minute!—what are you all taggin' arter me for!" exclaimed the nurse, who, at this juncture, had succeeded in bringing some animation to her patient, by a continued pressure of the hartshorn bottle to her nostrils. "Do you hear me, Ma-til-da? Will you take the children down?"

"They won't mind *me!*" returned the eldest Miss Dumsey, with a wriggle of her neck, as she caught hold of Tommy, who thereupon delivered himself of a war-whoop, and cried out, "She's pinchin' me!" A diversion in Tom's favor was made at this instant, arising from the breaking out of a private feud between Henrietta and Laura Jane, who simultaneously grasped each other's hair, and performed a discordant duet, causing the elder sister to interfere between them; whereat Master Tom

escaped, and took refuge behind the chair near his mother.

Poor Mrs. Dumsey was at her wit's end; but the eyes of Emily opening at this moment, withdrew her attention from intestine broils, and, like a good, tender-hearted woman, as she really was, she now bent kindly over the orphan, and whispered:

"Do you feel better, my poor dear?"

"Yes—yes, thank you!—thank you!" the girl murmured, brokenly.. "I was" ——

A shiver ran through her frame, and she almost relapsed into her swoon; but Mrs. Dumsey's ready hartshorn and sustaining arm, interposed to prevent it.

"Dear heart!" she said, "you are very weak!"

Emily's eyes once more awakened to the sight and her heart to the sense of sorrow; for the dizziness of returning consciousness too soon gave place to a more bitter realization of her desolate position. The nurse, meantime, had made vigorous demonstrations upon her rebellious progeny, driving them literally to "outer darkness," by swiftly closing on their retreating forms the door of the apartment; not, however, without a parting injunction upon Matilda concerning the pacification of Tommy, whose pipes continued to be audible in the distance. Mrs. Dumsey then, in a mysterious manner, informed Emily concerning the recent visit of the stranger gentleman.

"One of the nicest young gentlemen you ever seen in all your born days, Miss Marvin. 'Pon my word, he *was* a figger, in his elegant white coat, *and* his" ——

"Dear Mrs. Dumsey—what is it to me? Did he not want Mr. Jobson?"

"O! tell that to the marines!" rejoined the nurse, knowingly. "If you'd seen him stare at you, and so sorrowful-like! And sich a nice-spoken man!"

Emily tried to rise from the chair, more to escape the nurse's loquacity than for any object, and her glance wandered towards the table. Suddenly she exclaimed:

"I do not see it! where—where can it be?" and she searched hurriedly in her bosom. "It isn't here!"

"Sakes! have you lost anything, child?" asked the nurse, alarmed at Emily's confusion.

"There was a purse!—it was on the table," said the orphan, in an agitated voice.

"I'll be bound, then, that heathenish lad stole it!—the unmannerly scamp that he was!" cried the nurse, bustling forward to the table. "Here it was, you say? *He's* got it, you may be sure! A rascally villyan, if ever there was one! Gallus was in his face!"

"It's—don't worry yourself, Mrs. Dumsey!" murmured poor Emily, sinking back in the chair. "Yet—O heaven! it was all!" And covering her face with her hands, the orphan burst into a flood of tears.

When the daughter of a rich house bends, weeping, over a departed mother, she may indulge, unrestrained, the holy privilege of mourning for the dead alone, and her thoughts, clustering around the beloved one, may entwine with the memory of a thousand joys, and then soar up, in hope and trust, following the enfranchised spirit to its home of light and beauty. With such thoughts, such

unrestrained communion with and for the dead alone, a mourner's heart is solaced, the bitterness of its grief assuaged. But to the poor, this is impossible! The desolate orphan Emily was denied—as those in her condition are ever denied—the dear consolation of an unbroken period of secret grief, during which the memory of the beloved dead may inhabit and purify the heart. Poverty denied this. The dull, deadening sense of her own helplessness—her utter friendlessness—weighed upon her soul, mingling with the consciousness of her irreparable bereavement.

Mrs. Dumsey sat down once more beside her young friend, endeavoring to console her. "All you had, poor child! Is that so? But I'll follow the rascal! *I'll* expose him! He must come with the coffin! I'll fix him! Now, I'll stir about, and get all things ready, and you, child—you just sit still. No! lie down!—that's better. You need rest!"

Saying all this in a breath, Mrs. Dumsey began hastily to arrange an impromptu bed, upon a few chairs which she placed against the wall, and spread with a pillow and some clothing.

"There, child! there's a nice bed for you! lie down, now, do, and try to get a wink o' sleep, and you'll feel right smart."

The exhausted girl sank on the couch prepared for her, and essayed to thank the kind woman; but her lips scarcely emitted an audible sound.

"Poor thing!" said the nurse, "you're weak from cryin', I do b'lieve. I'll be bound, a cup o' tea 'll do you

a mint o' good. You won't? Well, now, that's queer! Well, jes' lie still; and I'll be back directly."

So saying, Mrs. Dumsey made a rush for the door, and disappeared, returning, in a few moments with a glass of some smoking beverage, which she announced confidentially as "port-wine negus, made o' fust rate stuff." Emily turned away, when this was proffered to her.

"Drink it up! It'll make you sleep!"

The orphan touched her lips to the compound, and then placed the glass on the chair beside her. Mrs. Dumsey shook her head, in melancholy reproof; and then, bidding the orphan "go to sleep!" covered her slight form with the quilt, and sat beside, till a quiet slumber stole over Emily's eyelids, and wrapt her mourning spirit in forgetfulness.

Chapter IX.

Mr. Jobson's Visitors.

WHEN the young gentleman who had found himself, as it seemed, unexpectedly within a tenant-room of Foley's Barracks, and in presence of a dead mother and fainting daughter, departed to continue his search for Mr. Jobson, his mind was filled with conjectures regarding the spectacle just presented to his view—involving, of course, speculations concerning Emily, and comparisons between her and Mrs. Dumsey not favorable to the latter —all of which mental wool-gathering was interjected by expostulatory "pshaws," and closed by an abrupt encounter with an individual, in broadcloth and patent-leathers, heretofore introduced to the reader.

"Mr. Peyton! here?" exclaimed the agent, starting back in surprise at meeting this fashionable young gentleman in a dim passage-way of Foley's Barracks.

"Veritably me!" returned the stranger; "at which, doubtless, you are greatly astonished, as usual, Jobson?"

"But to come *here*, Mr. Peyton, you know!"

"Where the deuce else would I be likely to find you, my dear Jobson? Here is your domain, where you indulge all your charming little eccentricities, such as

squeezing the last dollar from miserable debtors, and selling at auction the broken chairs and straw beds of pauper tenants. Eh, Jobson! am I right?"

"You're hard on me, Mr. Peyton; but you will have your joke, you know."

"Joke! not a bit of it! But, let's to business—for your avarice has already divined what brought me here, in your place of torment. Jobson, I want money!"

"But, Mr. Peyton,"—began the agent, hesitatingly.

"None of your sham excuses. My sleigh is at the door, and you'll oblige me by just stepping into it; for, egad! money I must have, and you shall get it for me!"

Saying this, the young gentleman, in rather an impetuous manner, ran his arm through that of Jobson, and descended the stairs so rapidly that he dragged the agent downward with imminent peril to his neck. Arrived at the floor entrance, the latter beheld a stylish sleigh, with a pair of horses, restrained by a negro driver, who held the reins, but evidently so restive that Mr. Jobson drew back in apparent alarm. His companion, however, hurried him forward, and the wondering tenants around, much to their astonishment, beheld their landlord captured, as it were, in this summary manner, and borne away by flying steeds through whirling drifts of snow. It is likely that, had they considered this a final farewell on the part of Mr. Jobson, more than one of them might have been tempted to indulge in personal feeling to the extent of projecting a few missiles after the sleigh; but as it was, they contented themselves with sundry muttered expletives which may or may not have reached the agent's

ears. Altogether, Mr. Jobson was not a particular favorite of the tenants of Foley's Barracks.

Out of poverty's precincts, the horses sped fast, gaily prancing through the drifts in narrow streets, until Broadway was at last reached, with its jangle of merry sleigh-bells. Meantime, Mr. Jobson remained silent, as if immersed in thought, till the quick tones of his companion's voice suddenly roused him :

"Jobson ! how does our business stand ? What do I owe you ?"

"Well, to tell the truth, I couldn't, you know, just give the exact" ——

"Pshaw ! I'll wager, now, you have the sum, principal and interest, to a fraction, at your finger's end ! And, moreover, I know just what your computation will be !"

"And what is it ?—if you'd be so good ?" asked the agent, with a covert smile.

"Just the highest penny you think I'll stand, Jobson ! eh ! I have you there !"

"You've such a way, Mr. Peyton. But really, you know," ——

"Nonsense ! I know all about you, Jobby, my boy ! But here we are at your confounded office, where I danced attendance a full half-hour before I learned your whereabouts. Now, Jobson ! spry, my good fellow ; for I've an appointment to dine to-day." Saying this, Mr. Peyton sprang from the sleigh, and catching the agent's hand, landed him, with a jerk, upon the sidewalk.

Mr. Jobson's office was a small, square, uncarpeted room, with a cubby-hole adjoining, on the ground floor of

a building devoted to the accommodation of lawyers, brokers, artists, speculators, and all other professional or non-professional sojourners in a "good business locality." On a tin sign at the door was painted, "J. Jobson, Real Estate," and over the lintel was inscribed, upon a board, "Superintendent." An open stove, with a sleepy-looking fire, stood in the middle of the floor; near one of the dirty windows was a high desk, at which a red-haired young man sat, posting books. On the walls hung a few dust-covered maps. The cubby-hole, or sanctum of Mr. Jobson, was an oblong space, separated by a glazed door, with a green curtain; and in this cubby-hole were an iron safe, a small desk, and a rotary stool, which completely furnished the apartment, there not being room for another article. Into this, his sanctum, Mr. Jobson preceded his companion, and seated himself upon the stool, before his desk, while Peyton vaulted nimbly on the safe, and there established himself—his legs dangling in the remaining space of the apartment.

"Now, Shylock, my boy—let me have the needful."

Mr. Jobson requested Mr. Peyton to "be so kind as to raise your leg, you know," and then, opening the safe-door, drew forth, from various crevices within, a handful of smoky-looking papers, apparently memoranda of different ventures on the sea of money-craft; he unfolded, one by one, and then as carefully refolded, several dog-eared documents, from which, at no distant day, he well knew as good gold would be extracted as if they were the fabled philosopher's stone itself; he thumbed the parchment records of foreclosed mortgages and notes of judg-

ments gone by default; and at length he drew out a roll of paper slips, tied tightly with a red tape, and as he unfastened and glanced at them, gave utterance to several cabalistic words:

"Um! Two hundr'd—seven hundr'd—five hundr'd—seventy-five—three hundr'd—nine hundr'd—five is five—two and seven's nine—five's fourteen, and three is" ——

"What the deuce are you about, Jobson?" here interrupted Peyton, who had been yawning over the agent's delay, and now vented his impatience by a stretch of his limbs, which caused his foot, either through accident or design, to fly suddenly against certain broadcloth-covered sesquipedal proportions, forcing an abrupt whirl of the rotary stool, that almost destroyed Mr. Jobson's equilibrium, as he leaned on the edge of the desk.

"Ouch! Mr. Peyton! He, he! you're so rough, you know! Might ha' broke my back!"

"Hurry yourself, then, and no more nonsense! Just defer the study of my notes and obligations to another time, you unconsionable usurer! and attend to my present necessities. At your leisure you can gloat over the documents, and study out new methods of overreaching! but be so good *now* as to hand over the needful—five hundred, at least!"

"But, you know, Mr. Peyton,"—began Jobson.

"I know nothing at present but the want of money. There's my note; and the securities you have already. So hand over!"

Jobson sighed, and drew from his safe a plethoric packet of bank-notes, from which he passed over the

required amount, after closely scanning Peyton's obligation ; and the young gentleman, cramming the bills carelessly into his pocket-book, then leaped from the safe.

"Is your uncle well, Mr. Peyton?" inquired Jobson, as he proceeded to return his papers to the safe.

"Unfortunately for you—yes!" returned the other, with a laugh.

"He, he! you're so funny!" rejoined Jobson, as his visitor left the cubby-hole.

"Ah—by-the-way, who is that young girl—a tenant of yours—whose mother died last night?" inquired Peyton, pausing on the threshold, and speaking in a low key.

Jobson started, and changed color. "Eh!" he remarked, carelessly, "you saw her—a *protégé* of mine, you know."

This was said with a nod and wink, at which Peyton laughed, and called Jobson a "sly dog," whereat Jobson chuckled and rubbed his hands. Then the fashionable young gentleman emerged from the agent's office, sprang into his handsome sleigh, and was borne swiftly away. Jobson returned to his cubby-hole, reclosed his safe, walked a few moments up and down the outer apartment, with his hands clasped under his coat-tails, and then muttered between his teeth—

"Impertinent spendthrift!—he saw Emily, it seems! but I'll—I'll take care o' *that!*"

"Well, Jobson! how are you to-day?" said a voice at his elbow ; and turning, he beheld a man of fine exterior and richly dressed, but with marks of dissipation on his features.

"Ah, Mr. Richmond—proud to see you here? Heavy fall o' snow, last night."

"Have you ascertained concerning the matter of which I spoke, Jobson?" asked the visitor, in a low tone, seating himself in a chair offered by the agent, while the latter drew his rotary stool from its aperture.

"Estate of Mordecai Kolephat—property, et cetera, of all kinds! Every item, Mr. Richmond—that is, you know, all reliable items—eh? Wealthy man! Richer than I thought! Here's a list of houses, et cetera, drawn up from best authorities."

Mr. Jobson took from a drawer in his desk a folded paper, and handed it to his visitor.

"Thank you, Mr. Jobson!—this is reliable?"

"Safe—best authorities—almost to a T what he's worth," answered the agent. Then, as the gentleman rose, he asked: "Did you meet Mr. Peyton? He's just left here—two-horse sleigh!"

"No, he must have turned the corner. Two-horse sleigh!—fast young man, Peyton."

"Gay—a little gay!" returned Mr. Jobson. "Spends freely! but then, you know, when his uncle dies, he'll be a rich man!"

"Ah, yes!" said Mr. Richmond, moodily. "But people's dying is not so certain."

"Young people's," assented Jobson, deferentially. "But his uncle's old, you know."

"And why not the young as well as old?" muttered the other, as he turned toward the door.

"I—I don't know but they may, you know," said Mr.

Jobson, quickly, willing to correct himself, if he had committed an error. But the visitor had already departed, with scarce a nod.

"Got somethin' on his mind—that's clear!" soliloquised the agent, resuming his walk. "Mr. Richmond's a queer man—very rich, but a queer man!"

A timid knock at the office-door now announced a new visitor; and Mr. Jobson cried, in a loud tone, "Come in!" upon which the door opened slowly, and discovered a man who entered hesitatingly, removing from his head a very shabby hat.

"Shut the door!" said Mr. Jobson, sharply, as he seemed to recognize the new-comer, who obeyed the mandate in a tremulous manner, and remained just within side, apparently without courage to advance.

"It's you, Dobbs! is it?" said the agent, pursing out his under lip, and elevating his chin at an angle, without looking directly at his visitor. Then, with a jerk of his under jaw, as though he was apprehensive of tetanus, he projected the word "Well?"

This interrogative exclamation appeared, in fact, to operate as a well-aimed missile upon the unfortunate Dobbs, who, after several efforts to enunciate something, continued dumb.

"Come to beg off again, I take it," pursued Mr. Jobson, letting his eyes fall upon the silent man at the door, with an expression which seemed to make that individual shrink into a yet smaller space than his thin figure had before occupied. The two now stood in strong contrast before the furtive glance of the red-haired clerk; indeed,

it was easy to perceive that Jobson and Dobbs were quite different men. The former, arrayed in glossy broadcloth, with portly dimensions, patent-leather boots, imposing watch-establishment, and head thrown back in conscious dignity of position ; and the latter, a small man, with thin legs, his coat rusty and threadbare, his shoes patched, his features worn and thoughtful, and an air of unmistakable penury about his entire person and demeanor.

"If you please, sir," at last ventured the little man, coughing once or twice, to reassure himself, "if I might explain" ——

"Yes, that's it !—that's the way ! Always explaining, you know ! And, pray, Mr. Dobbs, what might you explain *this* time ?"

"I have met with a great misfortune,"—began the shabby man, but was again taken up suddenly by the agent.

"I'll be bound you have," said that personage, with a sneer ; "you're always meeting misfortunes, Dobbs ! Well, go on, sir—go on ! My time is always at *your* disposal, you know," he added, ironically.

The little man appeared for a moment to struggle with some rising emotion, which he checked with difficulty, and then resumed :

"A fire took place, last night, and" ——. He hesitated.

"Well ?" The catapult word struck the poor man a second time, full in the face.

"My little shop, tools, machine, everything—gone—ashes !" cried Dobbs, in hurried interjections ; after con-

cluding which, he retreated close to the wall, and wiped his forehead with a faded silk handkerchief.

Mr. Jobson remained silent during a moment's space, and fixed his eyes upon Dobbs, with an expression of fearful import, as if measuring the dimensions of the little man, before proceeding to annihilate him. Then, advancing close to his victim, so that his watch-seals pressed against that wretched being's shivering form, he drew a long inward breath, and straightened himself menacingly.

"Hah—you—Dobbs!" he said, "you—come—here, and tell me my security is gone—burnt—destroyed! *My* property, sir—*my security*" ——. He paused, and glared terribly upon Dobbs.

"But I—I will pay all I owe, Mr. Jobson—if you will be easy. This is a sudden—a very great misfortune."

"Dobbs!—you *shall* pay me! Remember that! I'll have no shilly-shally. Hark ye, sir! you owe me seventy-five dollars, with interest and costs. I took a mortgage on your rickety machine and tools, to secure my debt; and now, sir,"—Jobson elevated his voice to a very high key—"now, sir, you've gone and burnt them—to swindle me—to swindle me, sir!"

"Mr. Jobson!" expostulated the debtor, lifting his thin arms, while a crimson flush overspread his pallid cheeks, "don't say *that!*"

"It's a trick—a humbug! I'll see to it, sir."

"It is no trick, Mr. Jobson! I have lost, in one night, the result of ten years' labor! I am disheartened!"

There was an earnest pathos in the utterance of these last words which might have touched any heart but Job-

son's. They seemed to express the utter prostration of hope.

"I'll find out all about it, Dobbs. I'm not to be gammoned, you know," cried the agent, wrathfully.

"I owe you a month's rent, Mr. Jobson. If I could be allowed to look about a bit among my friends" ——

"Yes! look about! and run up another score! No, sir! pay the rent, or leave! That's my answer. Pay, or go!"

Mr. Jobson, in saying this, reached forward, and opened the door.

"I will do all in my power, Mr. Jobson," replied the debtor, mildly, as he covered his head with the shabby hat, and turned away. "I am sorry you are so hard on me."

"Good day, Dobbs! Pay, or go, you know!" said the agent, with a malicious emphasis, and then slammed the door hard upon the retreating figure of the poor man, who said not another word, but went his melancholy way. Mr. Jobson then startled his red-locked clerk with a mandate enjoining him to repair at once to the locality of the little work-shop lately occupied by Dobbs the Inventor, and ascertain, by personal inspection, the amount of damage done by the fire; after which, dusting his glossy beaver and patent leathers, the respectable agent, superintendent, and broker of real estate, leisurely sallied out once more upon the busy thoroughfare.

Chapter X.

A Family Council.

THERE were close consultation and great planning in the house of Mr. Granby, on the evening of the day on which the old gentleman had made the acquaintance of sundry tenants of Kolephat College. Bob the Weasel, on that eventful day, had, in great astonishment and some little trepidation, been initiated into certain secrets of civilized life, most novel and startling to his experience. He had felt the touch of a woman's fingers, bathing his bruised head; had been permitted to devour, without reproof, a plentiful and savory meal; and had received, moreover, at the hands of black Samson, a most necessary ablution, coupled with a thorough scrubbing of his diminutive person. In this condition, after listening to family prayers, and partaking of a parting bowl of porridge, prepared by the stately housekeeper, of whom Bob already stood in extreme awe, the newsboy was inducted, for the first time in his life, into a comfortable bed, with the promise that, on the morrow, he should see his friend Fanny, and attend the funeral of her mother.

Bob the Weasel, it is not to be doubted, was somewhat exercised in mind in endeavoring to account for his own

share in the day's incidents. It was altogether so surprising that anybody should take an interest in him—so unheard-of that an old gentleman, out of mere goodness of heart, should have bestowed upon a ragged newsboy such marks of kindness—and it appeared, indeed, so like a dream or fairy-tale, that he was to go to the funeral of Fanny's mother, and that she was not to be buried in Potter's Field—all these marvels, making the subject of Bob's reflections, as he was left in his new bed by Samson, caused in the poor urchin's brain so much perplexing cogitation as to delay for a long time the approach of sleep. And when his eyes at length closed, troops of grotesque tableaux marshalled themselves through his dreams, in which myriads of weeping little orphans and ancient gentlemen in camlet cloaks, fire-engines with pipes held by stalwart Samsons, and a confused crowd of policemen, newsboys, landlords, and tenants, all driven up and down by a mighty steam press, composed the main phantasmagoria.

Meantime, Mr. Granby sat in his arm-chair, in the library, while Samson occupied a seat at a little distance, and Mrs. George disposed herself comfortably upon the sofa, before the cheerful sea-coal fire. On a mahogany stand, beside the master, lay an open Bible, on which the silver-bound spectacles of the old gentleman were placed, within his reach, and the mild light of a shaded lamp fell, equally radiant, upon his reverend forehead and the divine page. Mr. Granby appeared absorbed in profound thought, which was at last broken in upon by the housekeeper, with the abrupt remark :

"That child is a perfect heathen!"

"A heathen, Mrs. George?"

"Not a bit better! I asked him, while you were absent, if he ever went to church or Sunday-school, and, would you believe it, he laughed in my face!"

"Poor child!" said Mr. Granby.

"Poor child, indeed!" returned Mrs. George, bridling. "I asked him if he knew the Lord's Prayer, and he inquired, 'What Lord?' as if there were a dozen. He's a downright heathen, Mr. Granby."

"And what are we to do with him, if that be the case, Mrs. George?"

"Mercy me! *I* really can't advise!" said Mrs. G., with a toss of the head. "*My* opinion isn't worth mentioning."

"But we are Christians, Mrs. George, and profess to have duties toward the heathen."

"I dare say, there are places provided for such poor children," said the housekeeper, with some asperity of manner, which was in decided contrast with her master's calm demeanor. "Almost every day, somebody calls for a subscription to one or another charity. Isn't there such a place as the Orphan Asylum?"

"Doubtless, Mrs. George. And Samson, here, will inform you that there is a place called Potter's Field; nevertheless, we have seen to-day how strong a prejudice exists concerning the latter; and, I doubt not, our young friend up stairs would object to being sent to the Asylum."

"Object!" echoed the matron. "I should think 'beggars mustn't be choosers.'"

"Pardon me, Mrs. George! The lad, it appears, is no beggar, but has contrived to support himself by his own industry. To be sure, his earnings must be scanty, or he would not have been obliged to sleep in—barrels!" The old gentleman paused and reflected; for it seemed to him an unaccountable riddle of city life, that children of Bob's age should be exposed to such privations and hardships.

"Quare children, dese newsboys—berry quare!" here interposed Samson, rubbing his head with both hands, as if greatly perplexed. The housekeeper nodded and pursed her lips, to indicate that more might be uttered on that head.

"Listen to me," said Mr. Granby. "We are all, I trust, anxious to perform our duties, as Christians, toward less fortunate fellow-creatures. It has been the will of God, this day, to cast upon our sympathies two of that class of whom our Lord and Master spake, when he said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not! for of such is the kingdom of heaven!' Two helpless orphans appeal to our ministering care, Mrs. George! one rests under this roof—perhaps for the first time in his life, upon a comfortable bed. Another, bereft of a maternal protector, remains under care of a poor sewing-girl, scarce able to support herself. Mrs. George! we will seek counsel, in this matter, of Him who 'doeth all things well.'"

Saying these words, the aged man left his chair, and kneeling devoutly beside the little stand, crossed his hands upon the open Bible, and closed his eyes. Mrs. George laid down her needle-work, and, with Samson, also knelt,

while the master poured forth a simple and earnest prayer for direction in the course which should be pursued. Then, resuming his arm-chair, Mr. Granby adjusted his spectacles, and, turning the leaves of the Bible, read, in an impressive tone :

"'If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfiest the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness shall be as the noon-day, and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and thou shalt be as a watered garden, as a well of water, whose waters fail not.'"

"Bress the good Lord!" ejaculated the negro, when his master paused.

"Let Samson now decide, Mrs. George, what shall be done with the boy Robert. What say you, my old friend?" said Mr. Granby, turning to his servant.

"De Lord is our Shepherd!" responded Samson, solemnly bending his sable head.

"'Feed my sheep!'" rejoined the old gentleman.

"And de Lord says, 'Oder sheep hab I, which are not ob dis fold!'" continued Samson, raising his eyes to his master's face. "Massa Granby! I s'pose Bob is one ob dat kind o' sheep, and" ——

"We must lead him to the fold of the Good Shepherd!" said Mr. Granby, quickly. "Ay, Samson! you are right; and our duty, as Christian stewards, is plain. Is it not so, Mrs. George?"

The housekeeper bowed her head in silence.

"Your little heathen must be converted," continued Mr. Granby, with a smile; "and I know you will not grudge a little trouble for his welfare, Mrs. George."

"What do you propose to do with the child, Mr. Granby?"

"For the present, let him abide with us," answered the master. "To-morrow, Samson will see that he is clad decently; and, I doubt not, you will speedily make the lad useful about the house."

Mrs. George sighed, and looked as if she abandoned at once all hope of further quiet or comfort in the world. At the same time, an angry impulse almost made her propose that a general invitation should be extended to all tenant-house orphans, but she checked in season the ironical suggestion, and contented herself with inquiring, if "the other orphan," the girl "Fanny," was to be brought likewise to their dwelling.

"I am perplexed about that," said Mr. Granby. "The child is so young, and" ——

"Female children are very troublesome," added Mrs. George.

"'Scuse me, Massa Granby!" here interposed Samson, "I tink I knows what to do!"

"Speak, then, Samson! You know this is a family council."

"Dere's de chile Bob—I'se able to manage him, you see, so as dere'll be no trouble to Missy George! Now, dere's de 'ittle Fanny—bress de Lord! she's in good hands now. Bes' let her stay jis' whar she is."

"But you forget, Samson—the seamstress is dependent on her needle for a living, and has already a child to support."

"Dar's jis' de reason, Massa Granby. If dere mought

be jis' a dollar guv to de seamstress ebbery week, for dat ar chile's libin,' den her rent might be paid, massa."

Samson glanced up, sidewise, at Mr. Granby, as he spoke this, and his dark features grew luminous with an expression of intelligent benevolence. His master looked at him a moment, fixedly, and then stretched out his hand, which the negro warmly grasped.

"Samson!" said the old gentleman, rising from his chair, and shaking his servant's hand, "often has your plain, practical sense relieved me of embarrassment. God bless you, boy! you have a good heart. It shall be done as you say. The lad shall be in your charge, and little Fanny may remain with her present protector! Mrs. George, will that suit *you*?"

Mrs. George looked as if she would rather have had the credit of proposing some such arrangement herself, but, nevertheless, nodded acquiescingly.

"So, all is happily settled!" said the good master, again shaking Samson's hand. "The Lord grant that our work may be sanctified unto His praise and glory, evermore!"

"Amen!" responded the old negro; "and bress de Lord!"

Chapter XI.

The Neglected Wife.

TO the pedestrian, toiling over barriers of muddy snow at the crossings, and picking his steps along the pave—to the hardly more comfortable traveller, peering from closed glasses of carriage or omnibus, dragged slowly by laboring horses ; and to the watchman, stamping uneasily the sidewalk, with wet feet—it was a sight suggestive of great comfort that met the glance directed to warm, fire-lighted windows of splendid mansions lining the aristocratic Avenues : and either of such beholders might be pardoned, if a shade of envy flitted over his mind, while fancying the luxurious happiness half-disclosed from these elegant dwellings. But "all is not gold that glisters," is an axiom, the truth of which causes its triteness ; and the bright firelight in magnificent parlors may cast its gleam upon pale cheeks and sad eyes, denoting, it may be, the ice of despairing hearts.

Thus, truly, if the wayfarer's vision could have penetrated through satin curtains to an apartment wherefrom mellowed radiance shone upon the darkness without, it might have discovered amid wealth and refinement which the unthinking world sighs for, that their possessor was

no happier than the shrinking outcast cowering in the area beneath. For, as the warm light danced hither and thither, chasing shadows around the gorgeously frescoed ceilings and gilded walls—flashing upon the polished surfaces of curious woods that formed the furniture—playing upon golden-framed antique paintings—glittering on the rounded beauties of chiselled marble and alabaster—and illumining emblazoned volumes of ancient and modern literature—it did not, it could not dissipate the gloom of a sorrowing spirit in their midst ; it shed no warmth into the bosom of an unhappy one who reclined upon the velvet couch, with pale lips compressed, eyes painfully fixed, and white fingers convulsively clenched upon a jewelled bosom. There was no realization of surrounding luxuries in the absorbed thoughts of that wretched one—of the wealth that was hers—of the gold squandered for her pleasure. Hours stole away ; and quarter strokes tinkled again and again upon the golden ball of the elaborate mantel clock ; but the cold, sad shadow moved not from that lady's brow, her rigid fingers ceased not to press the almost pulseless heart.

She was a young wife still, though five years wedded, who had stepped from the threshold of her father's house, with a heart rich in hopes, and a nature yet unschooled by the hard lessons of endurance. And now, weary and neglected, she wasted her existence in watching and waiting for uncertain gleams of happiness with an unloving husband.

The long time crept heavily, ere a loud peal of the door-bell rang through the silent mansion, startling the

lonely woman, and calling to her eyes a faint gleam, which was as quickly shaded by a cloud, as, with a perceptible shudder, she rose from the sofa, glancing nervously towards the door. Again the bell-wire was violently agitated, and the hurried steps of a servant, in the hall below, were succeeded by the sound of unsteady feet ascending the stairs. In another moment, the door of the boudoir was flung open, and a man entered, advancing with swaying motion towards the lady. It was her husband—Mr. Charles Richmond, a gentleman whose acquaintance the reader has already made, in the office of Mr. Jobson, real-estate agent.

He was apparently about thirty-five years old, of elegant form, and face which might be esteemed handsome, though the blue eyes were shifting in their expression, and the lips tremulous and undecided, while the full chin gave token of a sensual nature. His dress was disordered, and his flushed countenance and bloodshot eyes betrayed the situation in which the unhappy wife, too unerringly, had looked to see him appear. From the haunts of revellers, reeling with the fumes of wine, he had returned to that neglected woman, and now, unmindful of her greeting as he approached, threw himself upon the sofa from which she had arisen, half-muttering a drunken oath.

For a moment, the wife paused, as if irresolute—her hands pressed upon her breast—and then, gliding hurriedly to his side, laid her small hand upon his hot forehead.

"Charles!" she murmured. There was no answer.

"Dear Charles! you are ill!" whispered the lady, bending over the man, unmindful of the poisonous

breath of wine, while she pressed her cold lips to his brow.

"Why have you not retired, madam?" muttered the husband, with no manifestation of affection in his voice. "What are you doing, up at this hour?"

"I could not sleep, Charles!"

"Stuff! you have been dozing over a book, all the evening! Your eyes are red, and" ——

"I have been weeping," half rose to the wife's lips, but she repressed the avowal, and turned aside to hide the sob which choked her.

"Go to bed, Helen! Do you hear?"

"Charles! why do you treat me thus? It is unkind—it is"—exclaimed the wife; and a gush of tears, not to be restrained, concluded what she would have uttered.

The husband laughed sneeringly. "Pooh! pooh!—your sex have always tears at their disposal," he said. "Go to bed!"

"Charles! do you—do you *mean* to be so cruel?"

"Will you leave me, madam?"

The wife turned silently away, tottering towards her chamber-door, while the man, with a drunken yawn, stretched himself at length upon the couch.

"Are you not gone yet?" he muttered, perceiving that the unhappy woman had paused in the middle of the floor, and was gazing mournfully back towards him.

"Charles!—my husband!" was the response, as, with a sudden impulse, the lady retraced her steps to the sofa, and sank, kneeling beside it. "You do not mean to be unkind to me! I *know* you do not! *How* have

I offended you? Tell me, dearest Charles! O tell me!"

"Will you go to bed, madam?"

"Cruel, cruel! I cannot bear it! Charles, if you have ever cared for me, tell me why you treat me in this manner? Night after night, you come without a smile or kind word. I have not complained, Charles—I thought it would pass over! But, indeed, indeed, I cannot bear this treatment! It is breaking my heart!"

As the lady said this, she bowed her head upon the sofa, by her husband's side, and the thick, brown tresses of her hair fell, disordered, to the floor.

"Really, you are very careless of your toilet, madam!" remarked the man, with his former sneering laugh. "You must be quite sleepy! I beg you to retire!"

Those loosened tresses were then flung back quickly, and a look, in which tenderness, grief, and despair, struggled for the mastery, fell upon the countenance of the heartless husband, causing the flush upon his cheeks to fade for an instant into pallor. For a full minute, that strange glance perused his regular features, till the blue, insincere eye fell beneath it, and the mobile lip quivered as with fear. Then, as if, in that strange look, the wife read terrible truths, concealed before, she rose, without a word, moved towards her chamber-door, and, pausing at the threshold, murmured in a voice very low, but clearly audible:

"Good-night, Charles! God bless you!"

For a quarter of an hour after the door of her chamber had closed upon his unhappy wife, Charles Richmond

remained as if in stupor, breathing heavily, while the mantel-clock ticked with solemn distinctness, and the fire-shadows flitted irregularly in the light of the blazing sea-coal. But, as the golden quarters struck again, he started suddenly, and, rising from the sofa, walked towards a door opposite to that of the bed-chamber, and, opening it, entered an inner apartment, furnished luxuriously, like the boudoir, with the addition of a sumptuous bookcase, escritoir, and articles of toilet furniture, denoting it to be his private dressing-room. Here, turning on the gaslight, he seated himself at a table, whereon stood an ivory cabinet, which he presently unlocked, taking from it several papers, and spreading them on the table before him. The effects of his evening's dissipation seemed somewhat to confound his ideas; for some minutes elapsed ere he proceeded further, but leaned moodily upon his elbows, rubbing his fingers alternately through his thick auburn hair, and over his flushed face. At length, slowly collecting his faculties, he poured out a glass of water from a silver pitcher which stood beside the cabinet, and drank it at a draught; then proceeded with his examination of the papers.

There were several notes, traced in a delicate, female hand, which he glanced at, and laid aside; a packet of business-like papers, that were evidently bills and receipts; a few discolored sheets, seeming to be old letters, which he hastily tossed back into the casket; and, finally, a roll whereon was scheduled a list of some sort, which latter seemed to be the object of his scrutiny; for he unfolded it carefully, and, drawing from his pocket a

folded paper, the same he had received that day from Mr. Jobson, began slowly to compare the two.

To one who might observe this young man, as he now sat under the light of a shaded chandelier, the aspect of his features would not have been prepossessing, handsome as he was generally conceded to be by female connoisseurs, who envied Helen Richmond the possession of such an "elegant" husband. A close reader of the human countenance might discern in the compressed though feeble lips, and changing eye, as well as in the narrow space between the brows, the token of a crafty, and, perhaps, cruel nature. There was a certain sweetness in the conformation of the mouth, when slightly curved, which might pass, to a loose glance, like the mark of amiability; but a shrewd inspector would detect no permanence in this, but rather the chance or studied expression of yielding muscles. Altogether, though regular in feature, and of clear complexion, Charles Richmond's face was not a face to attract the love of a cautious observer. Certainly, if now scanned keenly, the changing flickers of vexation, cunning, and triumph, which it variously betrayed, were not at all pleasing to follow.

"No brothers or sisters—sole heiress!" muttered the young man, as he perused the papers attentively. "Jobson has done his business well! I hardly thought the old man was so wealthy." Here he seemed to be mentally computing the sum of certain figures in the column before him. "A house in F—— street; two blocks upon —— Avenue; eight lots in South Brooklyn; two stores in Broadway; bonds, mortgages, stock securities! 'Egad!

the old fellow must be a millionaire!" Richmond laid down the schedule, and passed his jewelled fingers several times through his glossy hair.

"And all may be mine!—all! for he has neither chick nor child but Rebecca!" The young man rose, as he said this, and walked up and down the apartment, with hurried steps.

"Curses!" he muttered between his set teeth, as he paused again, near the door, and stretched out his clenched hand in the direction of his wife's chamber. "Were it not for *her*!—a whining, pale-faced fool!" The man's eye, as he said this, glittered with a wicked light, which it was well for Helen she could not see, or she had learned more of her husband's character than had been revealed during her years of married life. But at this moment, a suppressed cough echoed from the bed-chamber, and the sound seemed to change the current of thought in the brain of him who listened; for he laughed strangely, and said: "Hah! she *fears* she is in a decline! My treatment, she will tell me, has brought on consumption. She coughs a great deal, of late—that's true!"

With these words, Charles Richmond walked back to the table, and proceeded to return the various papers to their receptacle; but, twice, ere he locked that casket again, he glanced over the schedule, muttering, as he read: "It may—it must be mine! Helen cannot live long, and—it must be so!"

What were the thoughts of this heartless man, and what the intentions darkly shadowed forth by his disconnected words, were not such as generally permit sleep to

descend calmly upon the soul. Yet Charles Richmond, in an hour longer, was wrapped in slumber, upon the sofa in his wife's boudoir ; and there, at daybreak, Helen found him, as she stole tremblingly forth from her own chamber, and crept softly to his side, imprinting a kiss upon the forehead shaded by auburn curls ; then, fearful of rebuke, fled back to weep upon her pillow.

An hour later, Richmond awoke, and, after hastily performing his ablutions, in the adjoining dressing-room appropriated to his own use, pulled the bell-rope violently, and ordered the servant who responded to have breakfast served at once in his library. It was soon announced as ready, and then the husband left his wife's boudoir, without a manifestation of solicitude concerning one who had kissed and wept over his sleeping form. When he had departed, Helen stole out once more from her chamber, listening to his footsteps, and half-murmuring his name, as if she hoped to call him back.

But the man was beyond the influence of her voice or her affection. Wrapped in his selfishness, scheming alone for personal enjoyment, Charles Richmond had walked beyond the circle of household peace, and given himself over to the demons of pride and falsehood. He was no longer to be controlled by a wife's love, nor moved by a wife's devotion.

And yet that neglected wife had bestowed upon the dark spirit who now plotted her ruin, all that he possessed of wealth and position. A few years since, Helen Ellwood moved, the belle of a southern city, the idol of a doting father, her only relative, and the toast of the fashionable

world in which she moved. A ball had been incomplete, if lacking her presence—an evening circle from which she was absent, accounted dull and tedious. A beauty and an heiress, was it a wonder that she was openly flattered and courted by a host of male admirers, or that she was secretly abused and slandered by half her female acquaintances? Brilliant at all times, she spoke and was obeyed. The men bowed to her slightest behest, the women called her "love," "darling," and "charming," and almost broke their swelling hearts with envy at her graces. But jealousy was of no effect, while the gentlemen acknowledged Helen's attractions; and at length the lesser lights in that firmament of beauty, wherein the heiress was the sun, united in a sisterly wish that some matrimonial eclipse would soon take place, obscuring, if not extinguishing, the overpowering brightness of this southern cynosure.

But Helen remained long in "maiden meditation fancy free," though her refusals of ambitious swains, and they were many, were chronicled with due seasoning of remark, until her reputed fastidiousness furnished a constant theme for the innocent gossip of all the unmarried young ladies of thirty and upwards—a fastidiousness which, in their eyes, assumed the character of heartless arrogance, when a certain Mr. Peyton, in the first flush of youth, and a large fortune, was unceremoniously rejected by the young beauty, and thereupon plunged into reckless dissipation. But, at this juncture, and even before the charitable gossip of the young ladies had been entirely expended, another event caused the spontaneous elevation of all the fair hands and sparkling eyes of the neighborhood. Miss

Helen Ellwood, the heiress, suddenly married Mr. Charles Richmond, a young lawyer, without clients, but a capital performer on the flute—without fortune, but an unexceptionable waltzer—with a graceful shape, delicate hands, and azure eyes—the whole constituting him, when *en promenade,* in close-fitting frock coat, as dashing a walking companion as any lady could desire.

The town was paralyzed—the gossips affected to condemn, but secretly rejoiced—the young gentlemen grew indignant, and voted Richmond "an artful scamp." But, after a few weeks, the newly-wedded pair gave a sumptuous entertainment, to which hundreds of "friends" were invited; whereupon the guests all agreed that Richmond was "a lucky dog," and "a clever fellow;" and thenceforth they envied him, drank his wine, abused, and dined with him as often as they were invited.

The death of her only parent followed shortly after the marriage of Helen Ellwood to the husband of her choice, and in another year, Mr. Charles Richmond removed from the South to the city of New York. Here the young man began to mingle in gay society—to patronize his "club," the Opera, and the "turf;" and here the wife experienced the first bitterness of her life, in witnessing the altered demeanor of her husband. Her rejected suitor, Peyton, had also transferred his residence to the northern metropolis, a few years sufficing him to squander, in a thousand follies, an ample patrimony to which he had succeeded at his majority. Mrs. Richmond met the gentleman occasionally in society, and grieved to see that his ruddy cheek had lost its hue, that wrinkles bordered his somewhat

sunken eyes, and that the frank expression of his youthful features had given place to the cold smoothness of a worldly face.

But if she remarked this change in Peyton, that individual was no less quick in discerning evidence of some secret uneasiness in her own bosom ; his eager perception taught him that something was hidden beneath a veil of assumed calmness—a veil that hid, perchance, her eyes, but could not prevent unbidden tears from stealing through its gossamer threads.

At first, the rejected lover experienced a secret satisfaction in fancying that the proud beauty who had denied his suit, was now a prey to concealed suffering. But, as, in various interviews during several years, he marked with jealous scrutiny a gradual but constant wasting of the woman's beauty, and could not but divine that some worm was gnawing at her peace of mind, the young man began to feel a renewed interest in her to whom he had been once passionately devoted. He longed to learn the cause of her unquiet, which, surrounded as she was by luxuries, and apparently ardently loved by her husband, seemed, at best, an anomaly ; for, never did he suspect the existence of that domestic tyranny which Richmond, after a few years, had reduced to a sort of systematic torture. In society, the wife never permitted a shadow to rest upon her snowy brow, or the trace of a tear to dim the lustre of her eyes. Still the life of any circle in which she might be thrown, though seldom, of late years, mingling in fashionable throngs, no one, save a reader of the heart, could have imagined that Mrs. Richmond's light laugh and

joyous glance were other than indices of her still happy and thoughtless girlish nature.

Such was Helen Richmond, after five years of wedded life with the man she loved. Faded and sinking, with all her tenderness chilled and beaten back upon her own heart, the wife saw herself solitary amid society, starving in spirit, with every luxury around her.

It was Richmond's usual custom to breakfast alone, and Helen dared not intrude her presence, though she yearned to throw herself upon his breast, and, in his sober moments, reveal to him how, day by day, she was slowly, surely perishing under his neglect. Poor trembler! little did she dream that such a revelation from her lips would but yield a greater satisfaction to his selfish soul! little did she suspect the feverish anxiety with which Charles Richmond watched and waited for the death of her whom he had sworn to love, to cherish and protect.

Helen folded her hands across her fluttering bosom, and walked to the next apartment, wherein, upon her husband's table, stood his writing-desk and the casket containing his private papers. As she crossed the threshold, her eyes bent vacantly to the floor, a folded paper on the carpet suddenly drew her notice, and she stooped, absently, to reach it. It was a letter, and the first words at its head at once arrested her attention; for, though very simple, they were fraught with interest to her. Those words, traced in a female hand, were, "My ever-cherished and beloved Charles."

It had been better for Helen Richmond, on reading this first line, to have cast the fatal missive amid the fiery coals

of the grate, and beheld it consume, without further perusal. But a spell seemed to be upon the poor wife, holding her steadfast where she had paused, with the letter open before her straining eyes, till all—even to the last syllable—had been burned into her brain for ever. Yet it was no love-note—no tender wooing of a rival in her husband's heart. It was of a remote date, moreover—showing it to have been written months before her marriage with Charles. Yet, old and free from rivalship as it was, that letter had power to blanch the cheek of Helen to a deeper paleness, and to check, with fearful suddenness, the pulses of her stricken heart. It ran as follows :

"My ever-cherished and beloved Charles—

"Your letter was received yesterday, and I have spent the hours since in weeping and prayer. I have prayed for you, dear Charles ! with my heart sobbing, well-nigh to break. O could I ever dream that you would leave me for another ? But I must not chide you—God knows how I love you, dearest—I would lay down my life for you cheerfully, without a murmur. But it is a hard sacrifice you require of me—to give you up to another woman, Charles ! when you have sworn to love no other one but your Margaret. You tell me you do not love the lady—that you will marry her only for your worldly prospects ! O Charles ! I feel this is all wrong ; but, alas ! what dare I say to you ? I am poor—without fortune but my deep love—God knows, I would resign a throne for *your* affection, if I were a queen, instead of a portionless girl. Charles ! what was it that you said ?—O Heaven !

did I understand your meaning?—that your love for me would remain unchanged, and we should be happy after your marriage! After *your* marriage, Charles! Do you not know me better? Do you think I would consent to do wrong, even of my great love for you? No, Charles! after your marriage, we must never meet more! Beloved, bear with me—it is the last time I shall annoy you. You will wed the lady, Charles! Do not wrong her trust!—be kind to her when she becomes your—wife! make her happy! love her—and forget me! I shall not live a great while, dear Charles; for my heart will break, in thinking of the past, and of my hopes, all, all withered. Farewell, dearest! I submit to your wishes, but I must never see you after you are another's. Adieu, Charles!—for the last time, *my* Charles! God bless and protect you! Dear, dear Charles—husband!—I resign you. Farewell, forever!

"Margaret."

The letter was creased with folding, and there were stains upon the pages, as if tears, dropping upon it while the ink was yet wet, had blotted some of the words. But Helen Richmond did not notice aught of this, for the contents of the missive—a revelation of the dreadful truth that Richmond had never loved her—had already accomplished their work upon her brain. Pressing the fatal letter to her bosom, she sank senseless upon the floor.

Chapter XII.

Margery and the Miser.

THE stillness of the night was unbroken, save when some fiercer blast than usual swept through the passages of the old house, rattling its shattered windows, and slamming unfastened doors. The light of stars stole dimly into the room where lay, in a plain pine coffin, the corpse of Fanny's mother. Otherwise, the apartment, squalid and desolate, presented the same aspects as it might have exhibited the night previous; only the red-stained coffin showed that death had been there, and that now one the less of humanity suffered in mortal life. The door had been locked, and the dead left until the morrow should arrive, and a burial consign dust to dust. Meantime, the orphan, under protection of the seamstress, had been tenderly cared for, and soothed to sleep, with little Harry, while Margery herself remained at her work-stand, repairing, with kindly thought, the tattered habiliments of her new charge. She had heard the two children say their simple prayers at her knee, kissed them, as she disposed the bed-clothes snugly about their forms, and then, as usual, hurried to her evening toil. And now, as the midnight came again, and the fire burned low upon the hearth, she

still plied the needle, fashioning a mourning frock for the stranger child, out of a portion of her own scanty wardrobe.

Margery's eyes were heavy, and it was with difficulty that she pursued the task; for her overwrought frame required repose; indeed, at length, a stupor, for it could not be called sleep, overcame her faculties completely, and she bowed her forehead upon the table, while unquiet fancies crowded on her mind. When her eyes again unclosed, the candle had burned into its socket, and thick darkness shrouded the room, while her breath was stifled with smoke that seemed to encompass her densely. Starting to her feet, Margery tottered to the door, and, opening it, became sensible that the passage-way without, like her own apartment, was filled with smoke, and a smell as of burning wood, which almost choked her. The unclosing of the door of her chamber caused a current of air to flow through the entry, and, as the seamstress paused tremblingly upon her threshold, a low groan, and then a stifled cry, as for assistance, reached her ears, apparently proceeding from the floor above. It was the impulse and act of a moment for Margery to reach for and light a fragment of tallow candle, and, shielding it from the draught, to advance to the flight of stairs near her door, and listen for other sounds. At the same time, the dreadful thought crossed her mind, that if the tenant-house should be on fire, the lives of all its inmates were in danger.

There is courage, we may believe, in the soldier, mounting to the deadly breach amid a thousand flying deaths;

courage in the mariner, stemming in shattered boat the stormy waters ; but there was more than courage in the devotion of that poor girl, as, murmuring a prayer to her Heavenly Father, she passed through the thickening atmosphere, and, with unfaltering steps, began to ascend the narrow staircase to the next story. Compressing her lips, and retaining her breath, she struggled upward, the flickering candle-light scarce penetrating the gloom before her.

Arrived at the top of the broken steps, Margery paused once more, endeavored to listen, and the next instant heard the stifled groaning close at hand. Then it suddenly occurred to her mind, that an old man was in the daily habit of passing her own apartment, and ascending to this floor, and that perhaps it was his feeble voice which now essayed to make itself heard. By the candle-rays, she saw a closed door before her, and at once knocked upon its panel. A smell of smouldering cloth and pine-wood rising, at the same time, from the crevice under this door, satisfied the seamstress that the fire, from whatever proceeding, was within the apartment.

There was, indeed, something strange in the quiet coolness of this girl, thus seeking, at the dead of night, to discover the presence of that dread element, before the mere suspicion of which hundreds would have fled in terror. But Margery trusted in God, and was not afraid. She felt intuitively—at the moment when, starting from feverish dreaming, a cloud of smoke enveloped her—that upon her discretion and coolness, perhaps, depended the lives of a hundred fellow beings. She knew that her

darling brother, and the orphan child, Fanny, were slumbering, unconscious of danger, in the little bed-room. She was aware that most of the inmates of Kolephat College were at this hour asleep, wearied, the greater part of them, by the day's struggle against want and cold. If fire had broken out in that crowded dwelling-place, and if it could not be checked, a terrible sacrifice of life would inevitably result; and so, likewise, if a sudden alarm should be given, the panic-stricken inmates, seeking flight in darkness, through the narrow passages and steep stairways, must run a fearful risk of being crushed or trampled upon, or cast headlong to the floors beneath. To weigh these consequences in her mind, and to act at once for their prevention, by seeking to discover, by herself, the cause of the smoke which enveloped her, were Margery's prompt impulses, and she now felt, with thankful heart, that but a single door interposed between herself and the burning material.

But that door was fast, and to Margery's repeated knocks and calls, no response was returned, save the low, moaning sound she had heard before. The smoke, meanwhile, continued to emerge, in denser wreaths, from the opening at the threshold, and the seamstress feared now that all within would speedily burst forth in flames. She knocked and called more vehemently, and shook the worm-eaten panels, till suddenly a bolt appeared to give way, and the next moment a draught of air revealed an open passage. The wooden bar, used by the miser Mallory as a stanchion, had again slipped from its place, and allowed the door to swing back upon its hinges. Margery, ex-

tending the fragment of candle before her, entered the apartment, and saw, lying across the floor, the prostrate figure of the old man whom she had often encountered, climbing, with feeble steps, the stairs of Kolephat College. He lay insensible, or rather impotent, stretched beside the hearth, his lips emitting the moans that had guided the seamstress to his room, in season to save not only him, perhaps, but all the wretched inmates of the tenant-house, from cruel injury, if not from death.

Mallory was nearly dead, from asphyxia, caused by inhaling the poisonous atmosphere that pervaded the apartment. Beside him was the broken stove, which had been overturned, and the coals, escaping from it, had ignited a bundle of filthy rags and shreds of leather, collected by the wretched old man from the gutters which it was his custom to rake, when not covered by snow. These rags, in a vile accumulation, had sogged and burned, with smothered fire, during hours past, since the miser, in attempting to rise from his pallet, had overthrown the stove, and fallen with it, dangerously burned, to the floor. A cloud of poisonous gas, rising around him, pervaded the room, and escaped in smoke through the outer passages; and, in a few more minutes, the miser's breath would, perhaps, have been stifled for ever, and the wood-work of his wretched hovel, reached by the fire, might, in all likelihood, have been a funeral pyre for both him and his beloved gold beneath the hearth-stone.

But the fire still smouldered, and Margery, with calm presence of mind, averted all impending danger. Closing her nostrils and mouth against the noxious effluvia, she

caught up a fragment of the broken stove, and with it swept the charred mass of rags into the fire-place. Then, rushing to the single window of the apartment, she dashed it open, and, leaning over the sill, inhaled a deep, refreshing draught of the reviving breeze.

The chill air rushed in, scattering the poisonous vapors, and Mallory's eyes opened, his dim senses half-returning. Groaning still, he essayed to rise, but his aged limbs had been bruised and burned by the stove in falling, and blood still flowed from a broad wound on the forehead, received that day in his struggle with the drunken ruffian, Keeley. Margery, somewhat invigorated by the pure air she had breathed at the window, now approached the wretched dotard, with the light, and saw that his thin hairs were all stained with a clotted stream, that had effused from the wounded brow. Mallory looked up at her face, and his red eyes gleamed with suspicion, from beneath the bony forehead, over which his yellow skin was drawn tightly, like parchment.

The seamstress stooped beside him, taking his shrivelled hand in her own, while she softly asked him concerning his hurt. The forlorn miser seemed to shrink, apprehensively, unused to words of sympathy from human lips, and his own moved, as though he would speak, though emitting no sound. Then he half-raised one trembling hand to his bleeding head, and nodded slowly.

"Poor old man! I will come again, in a moment," said Margery; and, placing the candle near him, she lightly retraced her steps to her own room, whence she presently returned, with water and some linen cloth,

wherewith to bathe the miser's wounds. Old Mallory, as his wandering senses began again to inform him, marvelled much, in his sordid mind, concerning the soft hand that washed the bloody clots from his grey hair. To his desolate selfishness, it appeared strange—even as if an angel of mercy were near—though he saw that a very homely garb clothed the fragile form which knelt beside him.

In a few moments, Mallory's forehead was freed from dirt and gore, and swathed with a linen bandage ; and then, by the feeble rays of her candle, Margery endeavored to arrange the wretched litter of straw, that served the miser for his pallet. The dotard's furtive glances followed her every motion, and, ever, as she moved near the fireplace, a gleam of suspicion shot from under his shaggy brows. At length the seamstress contrived to dispose the miserable rags which served for covering, in such a manner as to present the semblance, at least, of a bed; and then, exerting all her strength, assisted the helpless old man to reach his resting-place. He mumbled unintelligibly, as his head sank upon the pillow she had made, and Margery, fancying that he asked for water, again descended to her room, and brought back a glass of sweetened milk, which the miser drank greedily.

"Can I get anything else?" Margery inquired, softly ; and the old man, somewhat revived by his draught, muttered : "What do you want? I have nothing to give! I'm very poor!"

Margery looked as if she thought there need be no assurance given of this fact, and Mallory seemed to interpret her reflection, for he said :

"Ay, ay!—you're a nice girl!—good to the old man! —the poor old man!"

"You will sleep now—don't you think?" asked Margery.

"Ugh!" returned the miser. "He will come in the night, perhaps!"

"Who will come?" asked the seamstress.

"Nobody—nobody! Go away!" replied Mallory, his suspicious mind becoming again troubled. "Good-night to you."

"I'm just underneath," said the girl: "if you should be sick, you might knock on the floor."

"Ay, ay!—I'm not sick. Good-night to you."

"Good-night! You'll not forget to knock?" said Margery, turning towards the door. Mallory did not answer, but turned his head to the wall.

"I must not annoy him! he is wearied and in pain!" thought the seamstress. "Hard that he should be left alone!"

Saying this, and sighing as she spoke, Margery looked about, to discover, if possible, some lamp or candle to light; for it seemed to her wrong to leave the sick old man in the darkness of his wretched den. She recollected, too, the open window, and stepped back to close it. As she did so, Mallory turned his head, and muttered:

"Will ye leave the bit o' candle?"

"Surely," replied Margery, at once setting down the tin candlestick, in which a couple of inches of the candle were yet unconsumed. "But I fear it will not last till morning."

"Put it out, plaze!"

"But it will be so dark for you!"

"I'd rather save it, avick! An' I've matches!"

The miser again turned his face to the wall, and Margery, bidding him again good-night, left the apartment; but, as she was descending the stairs, a renewed noise recalled her, in fear that the helpless dotard had fallen from his truckle-bed. But, on reaching the door, which she had closed behind her, she found it again fastened, and heard, from within, what sounded like a chuckling laugh. The wretched Mallory had risen, tottering from his pallet, and once more secured his wooden bar against the panel.

Chapter XIII.

The Hebrew's Daughter.

BEFORE a comfortable-looking dwelling-house, in a secluded street, of the eastern quarter of the city, an old man walked slowly back and forth upon the sidewalk, his hands clasped behind his back. He was stout in build, with a short, thick neck, suggestive of apoplectic tendencies. He wore a thick, brown surtout, closely buttoned, and a narrow-brimmed hat ; and his feet were encased in stout leather boots. Short-curled hair, the sable hue of which was slightly varied by silver threads, and a large curved nose, stamped him as of the Hebrew race. Indeed, he was well known, not only in the purlieus of exchange, but throughout the financial world, as Mordecai Kolephat, the rich Jew. He now tramped up and down the snowy walk, impatiently waiting the postman, who, about this hour in the morning, was accustomed to bring his daily correspondence.

Mordecai Kolephat was considered to be a frigid and selfish old gentleman, little given to mingling with the world, and penurious to the last degree. Yet, there were some who said he had been known to perform generous actions, perhaps from whim, perhaps through ulterior

motives of interest. He was a widower, and childless; though Rebecca, his niece, who dwelt with him in the old mansion, was considered by everybody as his adopted daughter, to whom would, undoubtedly, descend his property, real and personal. To what that property might amount in value, was a subject of much speculation among the gossips of the neighborhood; but all agreed that it was large, not falling short of half a million, in houses, bonds and mortgages, and substantial stocks. It may be supposed, then, this Mordecai Kolephat was a person of considerable consequence, and that, as he walked in front of his house, many good citizens bowed deferentially as they passed, and, perhaps, envied him his wealth and position.

But, perchance, had such good citizens been permitted to look into the old Hebrew's thoughts, and partake of his reflections, they might not altogether have wished to exchange positions with him, humble soever as their own lot in life might be. Impassible as were Mordecai Kolephat's bronzed features—hard as seemed his cold and glittering eyes—there were times when lines of anguish and tears of remorse disturbed their immobility. The Jew had his hours and days of suffering, of which the world knew nothing.

Mordecai Kolephat was very rich. His houses might be counted by squares; his title-deeds fenced in miles of rich lands; his bonds secured great ships and rich cargoes; and his coffers held heaps of bright gold. People said the broker and usurer Kolephat was "worth half a million," for they judged by his taxes on assessors' books;

but the old man laughed at his neighbors' surmises, knowing well that their estimate might be multiplied sevenfold, nor reach the sum of his accumulations.

Nevertheless, the Jew was an unhappy man. His retrospect of life was not a soothing one. He could look back to partnerships in ocean adventures—to vessels manned and victualled by his money, bearing unholy freights of kidnapped Africans, to glut the markets of the Indies, and coin, from human agony, more gold to swell his hoards. He could recall investments in the far-off western wilds, when his drugged liquor had maddened Indian tribes, and his gunpowder, trafficked for costly peltries, had armed the savages against his countrymen, the frontier whites. He could recollect the prayers of debtors, left to rot in mouldy prisons, when law stood by to aid the crimes of Mammon. But, of these reminiscences, Mordecai Kolephat took less heed than of the bitter personal experiences which had made him comfortless amid luxury—poor, in spite of his affluence ; for the Jew had beheld his family wither, one by one. Seven children had been born to him, by their mother ; five had withered in their beds, and died in the spring of life ; one had wedded with a stranger, an alien from his faith, and fled away with his bride, from the bitterness of a father's malediction, to be heard of no more. The seventh, child of his old age, had been stolen from her nurse's arms, while yet a little babe, and the mother had then sunk down and died, with broken heart, leaving the rich Jew to curse the fate that had left him, the last of his house, a blasted trunk, its branches prematurely lopped away, its

vigor "dead at the top." Such was Mordecai Kolephat, the owner of Kolephat College.

The Hebrew, at length, received his letters from the obsequious postman, and then slowly entered his habitation. In the hall, as he closed the door, a young girl came to meet him. It was his niece, Rebecca: a girl, with feminine features, marked with Israelitish lineaments, but delicately, as not to mar a very attractive contour of face and really fine complexion. Heavy curls were pendant upon a well-developed bust, and the form and air of the lady were what the French would style *petite*. She caught her uncle's hand, as he advanced, and asked:

"Nothing for me—no note, dear uncle?"

"Here is one, my child. I fear you are carrying on some clandestine correspondence, Rebecca!" said the old man, with a grim smile, as he handed her a letter. "I must see to it."

"Pshaw, uncle! it's from Miriam Woolff!—who do I write to but her? There—her name, uncle!" And the girl offered the note, written in a delicate hand, to her uncle's inspection; but he moved his head, impatiently, saying: "Nonsense, child—I did but jest!" and passed on to his private parlor.

Rebecca's dark eyes flashed, as she looked after him, and, kissing the note she had received, she hastily thrust it into her bosom, and ran up stairs, singing as she went, to her apartment. Arrived there, closing and locking the door, she sat down to read the missive, her face and neck growing crimson, as the first words met her eye; for, indeed, it was no school-girl epistle, from her friend Miriam

Woolff, but a letter filled with words such as stir, in a maiden's soul, the thrills of passionate love.

"My dearest Rebecca,"—so the note ran—"I am thinking of you by day, dreaming of you at night, adoring you always. I have much to tell you, sweet one, and must see you to-day. Fail not to meet me, at the usual hour, at our trysting-place, darling of my soul.

"Your fond one, Miriam Woolff."

A proud smile played on Rebecca's chiselled lips, as she perused the love-letter, and kissed it repeatedly, with all the ardor of first-love as usually developed in a girl of seventeen. "Darling fellow!" she murmured, evidently referring to another than her friend "Miriam Woolff;" and then, starting up suddenly, added—"the usual hour! —I must hurry to see the darling!" With these words the Jew's daughter proceeded hastily to the mysteries of the toilet, intent on arranging herself in all the elegancies of dress and ornament deemed essential to the state of "perfect love" in which she felt herself.

Meantime, Mordecai Kolephat, returning to his study, began to read his correspondence. He passed quickly over letters respecting the rise and fall of stocks, the exchange of money, and the sales of real estate; laid aside two or three longer epistles, to be perused at leisure; and, finally, opened a small, clumsily-folded note, written on a dirty scrap of paper, in a cramped hand, and addressed to "M. Kolephat, Esq." Its contents riveted his attention:—

"If Mister Kolephat wants to see an old acquaintance, and hear a secret, he will come to the tenant-house, No. —, in —— street, rear building, back room—to-day, or never."

The Hebrew scanned the note closely, seeking for a signature, but discovered none. The handwriting, scarcely to be deciphered, he could not recognize; yet, as he spelled out the scroll, the old man's lips quivered, and a presentiment of something to befall him flitted strangely across his mind. But Mordecai Kolephat was not one to speculate long upon what was doubtful, when the means of explanation were so plainly indicated. He rose, refolding the note, and, placing it in his pocket, said, with a nod of the head, "to-day, or never!"—I will obey this summous—to pass away the time."

"To pass away the time!"—to find refuge from his own unhappy reveries—Mordecai Kolephat would have voyaged around the world. Why not, then, stroll to the back-room of a tenant-house? So the Jew buttoned himself again in his brown great-coat, and went quietly out of the house, to visit "an old acquaintance;" and scarcely had he departed, when his niece Rebecca, arrayed in captivating symmetry, with furred mantilla, furred boots, and dainty fur-tipped gloves, descended the staircase from her dressing-room, and tripped away to meet "a new acquaintance"—whither, as in deference to her sex, the reader is called upon to follow.

The trysting-place was not remote, and the steps of love are fleet, so Rebecca soon traversed the streets that

intervened, and crossing a fashionable avenue, entered into one of those quiet and genteel retreats, usually kept by starched, prudish-looking ladies, of uncertain years, and devoted at once to the dispensation of ice-creams and thin sugar cakes, and to the happiness of *tête-à-tête* lovers, seated at little round marble tables. The young Jewess appeared to be well acquainted in the saloon, for she nodded familiarly to the waitress, and passed to an interior apartment, separated from the main room by a heavy curtain drapery, looped up, at either side, with gilded rings. As she reached the curtain, her quick eye caught sight of an elegantly-attired and handsome gentleman, who rose immediately to greet her, and led her to the table at which he had been sipping chocolate.

"Dear Charles! I hurried so!" said the Jewess, naïvely. "I was frightened, lest you would think I was not coming."

"Then I would have waited in grief and lonesomeness, darling Rebecca!" replied the gentleman, pressing her hand. "But, here is the girl."

A waitress approached at this moment, and Rebecca, loosening her bonnet-strings, gave an order for some slight refreshment, and then fixed her eyes upon her companion's face, with a look of such doating fondness that the lover smiled to observe it.

"Is your uncle well, to-day, Rebecca?"

"Oh! Charles, don't talk of the stupid old man. It's so horrid dull in that house. Let us talk of ourselves! Tell me you love me, Charles!—that I am as dear to you as you are to me."

All this was said in a hurried whisper, full of strange fervor. He to whom it was addressed replied gallantly, in a like low tone of voice, to the effect that the maiden was the light of his heart, and the joy of his existence, and much more of the same style, in the generally accepted language patent of love interviews; after which ice-cream was brought to Rebecca, which she toyed with, languidly, declaring that she could not eat—that she feasted on Charles' smiles—to which Charles replied that *her* smiles were more than mortal food—they were ambrosia of the gods, and so forth. Nevertheless, both of them took cream.

"And, Charles! you have not spoken of—*her*," at length said the Jewess, with a flush overspreading her face and neck.

"I wish to avoid disagreeable subjects," returned the lover. "Will you not permit the prisoner to forget his chain, dearest?"

"Is it not *my* chain, too?" asked Rebecca.

"But not to fetter us long," said the man, in a whisper which was intense in its distinctness, and was accompanied by a strange glitter of the eye that made Rebecca's glance droop.

"How foolish—how wicked I am, to love you," said the Jewess. "And yet," she added passionately, "I am never happy, unless when thinking of you, Charles. Oh! shall we ever be entirely free to love each other?"

"Can we control our affections?" asked Richmond, insidiously, as he bent towards the fond girl. "I am older than you, dearest, and yet love you quite as foolishly.

But, let us hope to be happy, sweet one! Perhaps, before June next I shall be free to cherish the only being I ever could love—my adored Rebecca."

The maiden's hand was held within that of her admirer, as he passionately uttered these words, and her soft fingers returned the pressure which he gave. Then more words of fondness followed, and much was talked of concerning the future: of a marriage to be waited for only till an event should take place; that event the death of a woman; that woman the wife of Charles Richmond.

Charles Richmond! the cruel and neglectful husband—the heartless tyrant of a patient, suffering lady—the crafty schemer to possess a usurer's wealth—well could he dissemble before the fond and foolish Rebecca. Versed in all the wicked lore which worldly experience can furnish—adept in hypocrisy and dissimulation—he had reckoned it but pastime to win the heart of this untutored school-girl, and mould her so completely to his wishes that she would have left her home, her uncle, and all earthly prospects, to follow him whithersoever he might command. But this was not the object of Mr. Richmond; for his callous nature was untouched by the self-forgetting fondness of Rebecca. He sought the Jewess only as the adopted child of Mordecai Kolephat—the heiress of a millionaire; and his purpose was to hold her as a captive bird, till the speedily looked-for death of his wife, and the decease of the usurer, necessarily not far distant—as he had already reached the Prophet's verge of human life—should give him Rebecca as an ornamental wife, and her large possessions as his own, by right of conquest.

And, truly, at this stage of the man's career, it became a necessity for him to weave some scheme of profit in the future. Charles Richmond was a patron of the gay world, a welcome guest in every fashionable circle. His house was magnificent, his horses superb, his wines incomparable. He was reputed to be immensely rich, and his style of living accorded with the reputation which he enjoyed. But Richmond had indulged in speculation—Richmond was an habitual gamester—and of these facts the world was yet in blissful ignorance. Helen Ellwood brought to her husband a large fortune—plantations in several southern States; houses and lands yielding lordly incomes. But, in the confidence of her young affection, Helen had yielded to her husband the entire control of her wealth; and the reckless man had used it as his own. What more is to be told? Suffice it, that, as he sat now, toying with the youthful Jewess, he was a bankrupt, with mortgages covering his very dwelling and furniture, the very couch on which his betrayed wife was now resting her aching head. Such was Charles Richmond, whom Helen Ellwood had married—for love.

It was a necessity, then, that the adventurer should cast forth his nets upon new waters. He had encountered the Jewess—read easily her plastic nature—and with little difficulty awakened her sympathy, by portraying himself as a man unloved and unloving, but fettered by an ill-assorted marriage. He pictured, with a master's skill, the unhappiness of a union between unsympathizing natures; sighed from his unappreciated heart; described such a woman as he could love—and there was but

one—and in the end, won the love, uncalculating and unreserved, of a woman in heart, but a child in experience as well as in years.

A child, indeed! for, as Richmond, after accompanying the young Jewess through a few streets, towards her uncle's house, parted from her, with a thrilling pressure of the hand, he muttered, under his breath, as he walked away: "Pshaw! a bread-and-butter school-girl!"

To such a fashionable villain is many a young creature betrayed, in the full flush of maidenly trust; immolated at the altar, to be miserable thereafter for life, or become a heartless woman of the world. How many are there, at this moment, listening, with quickened pulses, to the first words of deception from lips that will hereafter utter harsh rebukes or mocking banter of their easy trust?

Chapter XIV.

"An Old Acquaintance."

MORDECAI KOLEPHAT pursued his way, with his chin sunk within his raised collar, and his hat covering his whole forehead, down to the piercing black eyes, that seemed to scrutinize every object they encountered. He well knew the locality indicated in the note which he had received; for it was one of the many decayed and crowded tenements which he held in fee, and leased, through faithful agents of the class of Peleg Ferret, to thousands of such needy human beings as occupied the crumbling rooms of Kolephat College. It was the Jew's custom, at least once a year, to visit his property in various wards of the city—not, indeed for the purpose of ameliorating the condition of his tenantry, or to hear suggestions tending to improvement of the premises, but simply as a duty owed to himself as proprietary and suzerain of lands and appurtenances represented by the taxes which he had paid the city. On these annual tours of inspection, Mordecai often saw, for the first time, some lot of land, or dwelling-house, which, during the twelve months previous, had fallen to his ownership, through due process of law, including seizure and foreclosing of unsa-

tisfied mortgages. These new possessions, it may well be fancied, were looked upon by the old usurer in the light with which conquerors, on their triumphal tours, might be supposed to regard the goodly sequestrations consequent on their eminent domain. But, like such conquerors, the Hebrew little troubled himself about the civilization or refinement of his new subjects, content that tithes and dues, arrears and rentals, were duly accounted for by his chief officers, the agents, who farmed the different demesnes for their own profit as well as his security.

As regarded the tenants of Kolephat College, or of any other shambling, contracted, and unhealthy building leased through his middle-men, little did they know or care of Mordecai Kolephat. As far as interest to them was concerned, the rich old man might have been a myth, or that impalpable motive-power—a corporation. They knew but the individual who periodically demanded the rent, and whom they grudgingly paid, when able so to do ; and behind him might have stood the Czar of Russia, with quite as much disposition to redress their grievances, as the millionaire who reckoned houses, lands, and human beings, by the unvarying rule of "ten per cent."

Mordecai Kolephat, therefore, in presenting himself in the by-ways and passages leading to the locality which he sought, occasioned no stir or apprehension such as usually marked the approach of Mr. Peleg Ferret, or other agents of the Jew's business. He paused in front of his own property, and looked upward to dingy windows, or peered into dim alley-ways and entries, without remark or notice from the squalid people who tramped their errands, in and

out. He passed over broken thresholds, and through filthy hall-ways of a building fronting on the narrow street, which, in the ward assessor's books, was posted against his name ; but the slatternly women and dirty men, who stood around, merely looked at him vacantly as he passed, removed their clay pipes from between their lips a moment, and then relapsed to apathetic indifference. To their eyes, Mordecai Kolephat was an old man, in a rusty brown surtout, and nothing more ; for they dreamed not of Kolephat the rich broker, whose word was law in the stock market. Even so, O Mordecai ! might it be, were angels, instead of tenants, to encounter thee in thy walks ! The rich Jew—the cunning broker—the grasping landlord—might be all unrecognized by their exalted natures. For whom livest thou, O man of millions ?—a stranger in the hovels wherefrom thy golden hoards are heaped !—a stranger in that other world whither thou canst not bear thy golden treasure !

But Mordecai Kolephat knew and cared as little for his tenantry as they did for him ; and so troubled himself not concerning their neglect to greet him as their lord. He looked only for the place to which he had been bidden ; and, penetrating to the rear pile of shattered tenements, sought the room wherein, according to the summons, he was to find "an old acquaintance."

The row of buildings comprising this property presented no variation from the general type of tenant-houses. Built of rotten brick, barely held together by cheap mortar, the sand of which was continually crumbling out of gaps between the rickety layers ; pierced by narrow,

dark, and dilapidated entries, extending to a brick court in the rear ; ascended roofward by wooden-panelled staircases, not two feet wide, crooked and steep, and lighted only by such dim daylight as might penetrate to the landings through dingy casements, at the end of each ; burrowed under by cellars, wherein the rats disputed with lodgers as to which should first starve, stifle, or be drowned out by tides or the overflowing of gutters ; encompassed and pervaded by fœtid smells, the effluvia of noxious gases, generated in stagnant water, decaying matter, and unchanging malaria ; crowded with poor people, the bad and the good, the old and the young, the hopeful and the repining, the patient and the complaining : in all things, a veritable tenant-house, and, under that distinction, the abode of wretchedness, vice, want, and despair.

Mordecai Kolephat did not pause to dwell upon these matters in connection with his property ; but, after passing the brick-paved court, between the front and rear buildings, that was piled with dirty snow, proceeded through an entry till he reached the room of which he was in search, and knocked at its discolored door. An old negress presented herself in answer to the alarm, and querulously demanded his business.

Mordecai Kolephat peered sharply at the crone, who was decrepid and ugly in the extreme. Her grizzled locks were filled with ashes, and the scanty covering which sheltered her from the cold was literally encrusted with dirt, as were likewise her hands and face. With wrinkled features, blear eyes, rimmed with red, and distended mouth, within which could be seen but two yellow,

fanglike teeth, this hag stood, shaking, before the Hebrew, holding the door with her palsied hands, as if to prevent the stranger's ingress before he disclosed his purpose.

"Who have you within there?" asked Mordecai, nodding his head towards the interior.

"Anow—do ye want *her*?" mumbled the crone. "She's a-most gone!"

The Jew was about to inquire concerning the personage designated by "*her*," when a hand was placed upon the old woman's shoulder, dragging her back roughly, while another voice muttered, "Get away, mother, I know what *he* wants." Then Mordecai beheld, emerging from the darkness within, a dwarfed mulatto man, who said briefly to him:

"You're Kolephat, master?"

"That is my name," returned the Jew.

"You'll find the woman dyin'. It's well yer come, master, for 'Old Pris' has got somethin' preyin' on her mind that consarns you."

"Ha! 'Old Pris!'—it is she!" murmured Mordecai, as he advanced into the room occupied by the negress.

It was a dark apartment, the walls clammy with mould, the floor damp and uneven. A few stools, some straw, and a pile of filthy rags, and shreds of carpet in a corner, made up the furniture. At first the visitor could hardly distinguish objects, so destitute of light was the place; for the shattered frames of its single window had been covered up with boards, save one solitary pane, that admitted, through a veil of dirt, such struggling morning rays as could penetrate between the two high buildings

into the court without. When his eyes, however, became accustomed to the obscurity, Mordecai saw the hag flitting to and fro, and the squat, thick-set form of the dwarf, apparently awaiting for him to speak.

"It was Old Pris that sent the note to me—heh?" asked the Hebrew.

"Yes, master! The old ooman's g'wine to the rag-heap, mighty quick now. She's been a rattlin in her troat, master."

"Where is she?"

"Yander—ye can t see, master, kin you? Old ooman's sleep, or playin' possum. I'll stir her up!"

Saying this, the dwarf, whose thick limbs and burly body Kolephat now saw were clad, or rather draped, with a collection of ragged strips that scarcely concealed his sable skin, tramped over the wet flooring to a sort of closet, or recess, behind the fireless chimney-place, and made some demonstration upon an object concealed by the darkness, immediately after which, Kolephat heard his name pronounced, by a harsh voice, which he recognized as that of the ancient rag-picker, known to him, during many years, by the sobriquet of "Old Pris."

"My good fellow! let us have some sort of a light here," said the Jew, as the dwarf emerged again from the gloom into which he had faded. "I can never see the woman in this place."

Saying this, Mordecai placed a shilling in the negro's hand, who received it with a chuckle, and at once disappeared through the door. The visitor remained standing in the middle of the floor, though he heard his name

called once, from the dark recess, and recognized, also, the lugubrious sound of the death-rattle in the old rag-picker's throat, until the re-appearance of the mulatto, with matches and a candle, which he forthwith lighted; then, assisted by the flickering glare, he advanced to the closet, and beheld the "old acquaintance" who had sent for him.

Old Pris was a pitiable object to look upon, in any dwelling of a Christian land, even as the place in which she lay was doleful to contemplate. She was a woman of more than seventy years, with hair grey, and, at this time, matted by filth, in clots upon her low forehead. Her nose was prominently curved, showing the type of that race to which her visitor himself belonged, and on either side of it gleamed, from under the shaggy brow, a fierce, unquiet eye, which even now, when about to close forever, shot forth malevolent rays. Her mouth was shrivelled, the lips drawn tightly over the gums, beneath which appeared a row of blackened teeth. This woman lay upon a heap of rags, reeking with accumulated dirt, a strip of rotten cloth, the remains of a tattered horse-blanket, constituting her only covering, while a bundle of straw at her head, was soaked by falling drops of moisture, which exhuded through the plaster from the wall without. The recess wherein she reclined was formed by the span of a staircase which ascended from the entry outside; but, as it was hardly deep enough to admit the woman's entire length, her feet, wrapped in rags, projected out upon the broken hearth.

For the first time in his life, as he glanced about him, from the dying rag-picker at his feet, to the drivelling

negress and her son the dwarf, Mordecai Kolephat asked himself the question, "How do these people live?" He saw the rags whereon Old Pris was stretched, saw a wooden stool or two, a fireless hearth, and another mound of rags opposite, and the truth flitted across the Jew's mind, that the three wretched ones before him—the dying and the quick—were all inmates of that narrow, dungeon-like apartment, breathing the same miasma, suffering the same privations, dying the same death.

"Got her toes frozed, master, in the great snow, an' we tuck her in," here remarked the mulatto, as if interpreting Mordecai's reflections, and pointing, as he spoke, to the rags that bandaged the woman's feet. "She was a-dyin' then, ye see, and been a-dyin' ever since."

"Two days an' two nights," mumbled the black crone, hobbling towards them.

"Has she had food—was she nourished?" inquired the Jew, and heard in answer, almost as he had anticipated, a mocking laugh from the dwarf.

"Food is scass, master, hereabouts. Mother, what did ye eat for break-quest?"

The negress stared vacantly at her dwarf son, but made no reply.

"Here—take this—you must be starving!" said Kolephat, drawing a half-dollar from his pocket, and placing it in the mulatto's hand, who received it with a grotesque bow. "Go and get food for yourselves!"

The dwarf turned to his mumbling mother, and the two retired towards the heap of rags, at the other extremity of the room, where they sat down, and began to converse

closely together, seemingly in no hurry to satisfy their hunger. Mordecai Kolephat then drew one of the stools near the prostrate rag-picker, and sat down, saying—

"Well, Old Pris, I received your note, and have come to see you."

"You have, Mordecai Kolephat!" replied the woman, in a discordant voice, as she raised herself upon one elbow, and fixed her snaky gaze upon the visitor.

The Jew started, for the glance which rivetted his own seemed like one that he remembered to have met in the days of his youth, long years before he had encountered the degraded being before him.

"You have something to communicate to me, Pris?"

"I have *much* to say," responded the hag; "more than there is time left me to speak. Mordecai Kolephat—will you promise to listen?"

There was a wild earnestness in the rag-picker's manner, and her tones, though grating on the ear, were as impressive as was the strange gleam that shot from under her thick eyebrows. The Jew bent nearer to her, and answered—"Yes!"

"Then, I will speak to you of the past," whispered the old woman. She paused, for the rattling breath in her throat impeded her utterance, but, in a moment, exerted herself anew. "I will tell Mordecai Kolephat of the time when I was young, and walked the streets, as a lady, that I've since raked for the rags I'm lying on. A lady was I once, with rings on my fingers, and silks on my back—with fresh, red cheeks, and teeth white as the pearls that bound my neck, and eyes bright as the diamonds on my forehead.

And I was proud, Mordecai! proud as the devil that tempted our mother in the garden, spurning the ground I trod, and the hearts that were cast down at my feet in homage. He! he! even I—the old rag-picker!—he! he!"

The horrible, chuckling laughter was ended by another choking rattle in the hag's withered throat. The listener shuddered, and drew back from the distorted face that was shaken up and down, in the fitful candle-light, like a hideous mask.

"Don't be frightened, man! 'Twas but a pleasant memory of the past, when I had riches, and beauty, and lovers—ay, lovers plenty, Mordecai! Are ye listening?"

The Jew nodded, and again fixed his gaze on her, which he had withdrawn before the horrible grimaces that her wild mirth had occasioned.

"One there was—a lover! who knelt and kissed the dust at my feet, and swore to me body and soul, if I'd cast him not away. And I loved the youth, Mordecai! I *loved* him!"

The hag's voice grew strangely soft, as she uttered the last words, and the Jew suddenly felt a curious emotion stirring in his bosom.

"I loved him, for we had plighted our troth in youth—and he was one that a woman well might love. But, nevertheless, I spurned him, Mordecai Kolephat!—drove him away, with frenzy in his brain—because he was *poor!* hah! Mordecai, because the youth was *poor!* Was it not right, old man?"

The red glitter darted from those serpent eyes, seeming to fascinate the Hebrew's senses. He gasped wildly, as if his breath were stifled. He essayed to speak, but the sound died on his lips. Old Pris laughed, once more, her fearful laugh, and drew herself up suddenly to a sitting position, on the rags, her shrivelled hands clasping her knees and her head supported by the wall behind.

"Ay, Mordecai Kolephat! I drove him away, for his poverty, and wedded a rich lover, to ride in my carriage, and have my liveried servants, as a lady should. But he was avenged!—my lover was avenged!"

"And how?—and how?" demanded Mordecai, scarcely knowing what he uttered.

"By the downfall of her who had deserted him," answered the woman. "By the curse which clung unto her as a leprosy—wasting her riches, and searing her beauty, and shrivelling the pride of her heart. By the gold which *he* amassed while *she* sunk down to beggary—by the good name which he gained amid men, while she—Rachel the traitress—became a mock and a shame among women" ——

"Hold—woman! hag!" gasped the listener, "what memories do you awaken in my brain! Who tutored you to this?"

"Tutored!" echoed the rag-picker, with a fierce laugh. "Mordecai Kolephat! where is the Rachel of your youth, whom you waited for long, and lost at last—because you were *poor*? Look at 'Old Pris,' Mordecai! and see if Rachel still lives!"

The Hebrew covered his eyes with clasped hands, and groaned aloud. In an instant, memory rushed back and pictured the woe of his youth; the unselfish love he had cherished for a beautiful daughter of his race; the heartlessness with which she had broken her plight to him, in order to marry a wealthier suitor; his madness and despair at her treachery; and, finally, the recklessness which made him cast himself into the world's struggle, to wrestle with fortune till she yielded her gold in abundance, and made him the selfish, grasping man he had since become. All those shadows of the past flitted phantom-like, in one moment, over his mind; and then, uncovering his eyes, he looked once more upon the hideous features of his "old acquaintance," who rocked her withered body to and fro, and muttered slowly—

"Yes, Mordecai Kolephat, I am—Rachel!"

Chapter XV.

The Rag-Picker's Revelation.

THE scene presented was hideously grotesque. Propped against the mouldy wall, in her dark corner, sat the dying rag-picker, "Old Pris"—her cadaverous features cast in strong relief by the candle rays that flickered fitfully upon them, and her shrunken limbs and body, almost doubled together, seeming more like a goblin shape than that of human creature. Mordecai Kolephat sat opposite, his head bowed on his arms, his face averted, to avoid the glittering look which the woman fixed upon him, at every pause in her strange recital. At the other extremity of the room, crouching together on their heap of rags, the dwarf and his mother still remained, the mulatto apparently engaged in listening to some mumbling words that dropped at intervals from the crone's lips. On the one side, in the dim recess, the two figures were visible by a trembling candle's gleam ; and on the other, a few discolored day-beams, slanting through the single window pane, disclosed the miserable pair beneath. Cold, nakedness, hunger, disease, darkness, and death—with all the harrowing images of ill-spent years and guilty deeds—abode in this wretched apartment, where the Jew listened to the

harsh voice of one whom he had loved in youth, and whose treachery had made him trust the world no more in future years.

Mordecai Kolephat did not weep, for tears had long been alien to his eyes ; but his eyelids and lips quivered, and his breath grew thick and painful to draw ; for the damp atmosphere around waxed full of ghostly shapes, and the withered hag seemed now like the weird one of Endor unto Saul of old, marshalling the phantoms of memories bitter and gloomy to his soul.

"So was I, once," resumed the woman, as if interpreting his thoughts. "The beauty—the belle—the coquette ! Thus am I now, as you see, Mordecai—the despised, forsaken, and doomed. When I drove you scornfully from my side, I wept not, for my heart was cold with pride ; nor weep I now, Mordecai, for my heart is chill with despair. I wedded another—a rich man, and all my dreams of wealth and position were realized ; but years rolled by, to avenge the love I had slain in my bosom, and I strove to condemn, and ridicule, and hate all who were happier than I ; till, at last, Mordecai, riches fled from me ! My husband died, a dishonored bankrupt ; I became a shameless woman, and sunk—sunk down, Mordecai ! to the lowest depths of mortal vice and misery."

"No more ! no more, Rachel !" gasped the Hebrew. "I was, indeed, avenged !"

"Listen, Mordecai !" again muttered the woman, in her harsh whisper. "When next I saw you, after returning from a foreign land, where my youth and prime had been

consumed in excesses, you were married, and the angel of death had been with your household. But your wedded life, your reputed wealth, and apparent happiness, instead of giving pleasure to my wicked soul, made me regard you with envy and bitterness. I saw that another shared with you what might have been mine. I beheld you rich, when I, after revelling in luxury, was reduced to want and shame. Years passed on, and I grew to hate you, day by day; till, at length, a lovely child was born to you—the first daughter of your house. I watched you once, Mordecai, as you stooped and kissed that beautiful child, while tears fell from your eyes upon its face, and its mother" ——

The Jew groaned, and raised his hand, with a tremulous gesture.

"Rachel! Rachel!" he cried, "if you would have my pardon for the misery you caused me long ago, which has since clouded my existence, let not that angel woman be mentioned now. Let not her memory be mingled with this hour!" He rose, as he spoke, and fixed his eyes upon the rag-picker, adding, solemnly:—"I forgive you, dark spirit, the crime of days gone by! And now I will hasten to send hither attendance and comforts, that your last hour may be, at least, not void of comfort" ——

"Stay!" cried the hag, the breath rattling sharply in her throat, as she plucked at the Jew's skirts, with a fierce clutch. "I have not done with you, Mordecai Kolephat! Ah! I would speak to ye of the child—your baby child—that was stolen—stolen from its nurse!"

The old man, as he heard these words, seemed suddenly

stricken with ague ; for his teeth parted and met, convulsively, and his whole frame shook. "What of the child, Rachel?—speak!" he demanded, in a stifled tone.

"Did I not say I hated you, Mordecai?" cried the hag. "Hated you and the white-cheeked woman that loved you, and bore you the beautiful babe! I resolved, in my hate, to rob ye both of your idol!—and so 'twas I, Mordecai Kolephat, that stole the child away from its drunken nurse, and left my old lover again in misery and despair! Ah!—kill me now, Mordecai! trample on the vile rag-picker's head that plotted the deadly wrong!—kill me, for 'twas I that murdered your wife!"

The wretched woman, in the frenzy of remorse, cast herself forward at the Hebrew's feet, her distorted face burying itself in the wet straw, while her body writhed as if in mortal agony. Mordecai Kolephat bent over, and with difficulty raised her head, turning her features once more to the light. They were stained with dirt and blood, and a dark red stream was gushing from her mouth. The Jew supported her in his arms, forgetful, in his newly-awakened anxiety concerning his long-lost child, of the disgust which he had experienced but a moment before. At seeing her prostrate, too, the mulatto rose from his rag-heap, and, advancing, assisted to sustain the wretched crone, while her mouth was relieved of foam and blood which the spasm had caused to flow. Still, however, the rag-picker remained without motion, apparently senseless and deprived of speech. Mordecai Kolephat wrung his hands and groaned as he beheld this, fearful that she would die without another word, and thus leave him tor-

tured by a thousand doubts and fears engendered by her partial revelation. He hastily sought for another coin, and giving it to the mulatto, bade him quickly bring a glass of spirits, to revive, if possible, the strength which was fast ebbing from the shattered frame before him. The dwarf's eyes glistened, as before, in receiving the money, and he quickly departed to procure the stimulant, while Mordecai watched the discolored and ghastly features beneath his gaze, unable to trace a single lineament of the proud and radiant face that had charmed his youthful soul. Time, dissipation, and disease, with the unbridled rule of wicked passions, had done their fearful work, in obliterating every trait of womanly nature, and leaving only the hard, cold, ugliness of a demonized human being. It was a terrible sight to look upon, and doubly so to him who could remember like Kolephat.

The mulatto returned, with some fiery liquid in a broken glass, which Mordecai placed to the woman's lips, allowing a few drops to moisten her throat. A moment afterwards, a shiver ran through her frame, and her eyes, unclosing, glittered again on the Hebrew ; but now with a changed expression, as if the secret fires which fed their unnatural brightness were now smouldering out in the dying heart below. Her voice, too, was not so harsh, nor quick, but very feeble, as she muttered, mumblingly, like the old negress—

"You are here, Mordecai—not gone !"

"The child—the child, Rachel !" cried Kolephat, clasping his hands together, as he bent over the dying woman. "You said that you stole the baby, Rachel" ——

"From its nurse," muttered the rag-picker.

"And—O Father Moses!—her eyes close again! speak! Rachel—the child! You did not murder my child?"

"The child!—ah! she is not dead, Mordecai!" gasped the rag-picker.

"Speak! on your life, Rachel! As you hope for pardon, Rachel!—where is my child?"

The Jew bent, distractedly, as he spoke, over the almost speechless woman at his feet.

"She lives—here—tenant-house!" were the almost indistinct words that came from her lips.

"Here, say you, Rachel? In *this* tenant-house?"

"No—no!—not—not here!—at the other—there—there—Mordecai."

The woman's under-lip fell, and her face grew ghastlier. Kolephat placed the liquor to her mouth again, with trembling eagerness.

"One more word. Die not yet, Rachel!—with whom is my child?—where is she? speak!"

"Yes—yes! she lives!—dance—beautiful!—the organ-people! Mordecai—oh!"

These were the last words of "Old Pris," the rag-picker, ended by a choking gasp, which closed her wretched life forever.

"She's gone!" said the mulatto.

Mordecai Kolephat spoke not, but rose from beside the corpse, and tottered away, through the narrow and dark passages, and out into the street, with brain confused and eyes blinded, like a drunken man. But one thought pos-

sessed his mind—that his long-lost daughter, stolen in youth, was still living, and within a tenant-house such as he had just left—such as he owned. Every word of the rag-picker's parting disclosure was fixed within his recollection, filling his withered bosom with a new passion—with a new quest—before which the incentives and realizations of his past were as shadows and dross.

Chapter XVI.

The Yellow Dwarf.

WHEN an impatient citizen, annoyed by the monotonous bray of a third-class organ under his window, flings a subsidizing coin to the wretched son of Italy without, in vain hope of release, and then, in desperation, hears the solemn waltz or sepulchral quickstep maliciously renewed, it is not to be denied, nor marvelled at, that he gives vent to his chagrin in splenetic expletives. But of aught save the ring of metal on the pavement, the scion of Italy takes little heed, intent on finishing his allotted number of crank-turns, whereafter, shifting his instrument by its strap, he saunters leisurely to another halting-place. Thus on, through the highways and by-ways of the great city, attracting at corner curbstones close throngs of curious urchins, whose untutored tastes have not yet learned to distinguish between different gradations of orchestral effect. If, haply, the Italian be attended by a dancing-girl, with close-fitting bodice and embroidered skirt, whose fingers deftly vibrate over a tambourine, holding its cup aloft, to catch small drops of copper or silver rain ; or if, more captivating still, a restless ape, in flaming regimentals, perch upon the stroller's back, chat-

tering and moaning, as he clings, while, at the open organ-front, a punchinello-ball-room displays its groups of clock-worked manikins — then shall your first-born urchin, O good citizen ! desert the maternal knee, and with wild delight, clapping his eager hands, yield to the charming of the vagrant music-murderer whom your more fastidious ears are closed against in operatic horror.

All the live-long day, and far into the night, you hear the organ-drone. Long after the city streets have been deserted by all save travellers, a solitary Italian will plant himself at your door, and deal out his hum-drum notes to silence and darkness. At last, however, the organ-grinder goes home, and leaves his last victim unmolested till the morrow.

There was one, we may be sure, who halted opposite Foley's Barracks, in the early morning, though with little prospect of a *douceur* from the ragged, unkempt urchins swarming at the windows. There was a monkey, it is not to be doubted, that played his pranks in the gloomy purlieus of Kolephat College. Very likely a tambourine-girl whirled, sometimes, in front of the miserable pile of tenant-houses, where "Old Pris" the rag-picker lay dying in the dwarf's room. But no such figure danced in the snowy street, or through the muddy gutter, when Mordecai Kolephat, the Jew, after listening to the confession of his "old acquaintance," emerged once more upon daylight, and wended his way towards his home. Nevertheless, had the Hebrew desired to inspect the abodes and surroundings of organ-grinders and their *attachés*, he would not need to have left that block of buildings which

stood on tax-books opposite his name. Indeed, it was but a few rods distant, in the rear of the apartment where the rag-picker had died, that an entire floor of the shattered dwelling was occupied as a rendezvous and lodging-place for yellow-faced and black-headed men, belonging to that "army of Italy" who traverse, night and day, with heavy load, the streets of this metropolis.

Long before the interview between Mordecai and Old Pris, various squads of this army, that harbored in the tenant-house, had dispersed on their daily perambulations. But still, in a dingy room on the floor devoted to their accommodation, some dozen Italians of both sexes, were disposed in different attitudes. The group was composed of a withered and nearly superannuated man, an aged woman, who might be his wife, with a strong gipsey face, three younger women, and a half-dozen children of both sexes. The old man sat on a block, in one corner of the apartment, and held in his palsied hands a string of beads, with a wooden crucifix depending, on which he seemed to be mumbling unintelligible prayers. The elder woman crouched upon the floor, engaged in knitting, as were likewise two of the younger females, while the third stirred with a wooden spoon some smoking beverage in an iron pot that stood upon a furnace in the fire-place. Two boys were sorting rags near the fire, another engaged in repairing the broken pipes of an organ, and the rest, mere babes, were crawling or asleep upon the floor. Three straw beds, with rug-quilts spread over them, were ranged, head to foot, on two sides of the room, which, in dimensions, was about sixteen feet square, and, in addition to its

human denizens, contained two malicious-looking monkeys, chained near a pile of wood-chips, over which they were constantly springing.

Such was one dwelling, or *home*, of Italian organ-grinders, in which, at the present time, twelve occupants remained, and which, each night, accommodated three more, the husbands of the younger women, making in all fifteen persons confined within four walls of sixteen feet to each. Three families thus existed in a single room ; and upon the same floor of the tenant-house were other rooms with like "accommodations" for like wanderers of the streets. It may now appear no marvel to the good citizen, who learns for the first time these facts, that the organ-grinder beneath his window seemed reluctant, even at midnight, to "move on" towards such a crowded home.

The apartment was not, indeed, so dark as the basement lodging wherein dwelt the mulatto dwarf and his negress mother. Two windows, overlooking the court, admitted light, and the removal of a knot or two of rags from sundry broken panes could afford, if such a thing were thought of, some apology for ventilation. But, in dirt and grimness, the room might boast of peerlessness ; for the floor was thick with hardened mud, and the walls and ceiling black from the furnace smoke. Yet, over the beds hung two or three pictures of saints—cheap daubs, it is true—but sufficient to relieve the cheerlessness around, and impart some air of civilization to what might else have appeared barbarian life.

Civilization ! well may the political philosopher despair of that civilization which goes not hand in hand with

Christianity! well may the Christian grieve over the refinement which exalts the temples of his faith to the perfection of architecture—investing his worship with all the attributes of physical grandeur—and yet leaves the tenant-house, its surroundings, and its associations, to remain a blot upon civilization and a libel upon religion!

The female who stirred the contents of the iron pot paused in her task, as a voice sounded at the door of the room, and turned her head in time to greet with a nod of welcome the visitor who entered; for it was, indeed, a visitor, and one, as it seemed, in much favor with the denizens, particularly the younger portion, who began a confused jargon of welcome, as they crowded forward. The new-comer was, in good sooth, of attractive face and manner—a young girl, perhaps ten years old, with features of surpassing beauty, and figure that seemed, as she moved on over the floor of that miserable room, the very mould of grace.

"Ninetta!" cried the woman, embracing the visitor; and "Ninetta!" echoed a chorus of shrill voices, as the children clustered about her, plucking at her dress, or lifting their mouths for the kiss she bestowed on each.

"And where have you stayed so long?" asked one of the females, who sat knitting, whilst the elder woman, after nodding her head thrice, in measured recognition, pointed to a wooden box, as a seat for the guest.

"I have been making great fame," answered the young girl, speaking, as she had been addressed, in the Italian tongue. "Maestro Freidrich promises that I shall be

rich, and have horses and carriages in good time! Ah! *cara mia!* you should see me! Look, *monna!*"

Saying this, the speaker made a bound into the middle of the floor, and, poising her little form on the points of her left toes, lifted the right foot slowly, and then began a rapid pirouette around the apartment, much to the delight of the urchins, who shouted and clapped their hands at the performance.

"There, *Monna Maria!* how do you like that? Is it not a *pose*? The Maestro says it will make our fortune when we accomplish a grand contract with the theatre! What do you think, *Monna Maria?*"

All these words were uttered during the pauses of the girl's evolutions, and were spoken to the old woman who sat, knitting, upon the floor, and who only shook her head in reply.

"Ah, *monna!* you are angry with me!" cried the visitor, ceasing her dance, and stooping suddenly beside the old woman. "But I have not forgotten you, *cara monna!* See!—I have brought you money!—look! it is the bright gold!"

She drew from her pocket, in speaking, a quarter-eagle, and held it up before the Italian woman's eyes, which glistened with an expression of cupidity, as she stretched out her bony hand to take the coin.

"Ah, monna! you are not angry now! And I have saved it all—from the Maestro's gifts—to bring to you, who do not love me."

The brilliant eyes of the child filled with tears, as she murmured these words, and her emotion seemed to affect

the old woman; for the latter began to speak in a deliberate tone, saying—

"No, Ninetta! that is wrong of thee!—much I love thee, little one! It is a fine gift thou bringst me! much I love thee!"

The other women exchanged glances, as they saw the elder one place the quarter-eagle in her mouth, and both commenced to compliment their visitor, at once, concerning her proficiency as a dancer. But, ere she could reply, a knock was heard, and one of the children opened the door, disclosing a grotesque figure upon the threshold. It was the dwarf mulatto, who at once shuffled forward towards the spot where sat the beldam who had received the coin, and whispered a few words in her ear which apparently startled her somewhat, causing a sudden exclamation to break from her lips:

"Dead!" she muttered, staring at the mulatto.

"Clean gone!" answered the latter. "I know'd you and her was old friends," he added, with a chuckling sound; "and so I t'ought I'd let you know."

"Who is dead?" asked the child Ninetta, regarding Monna Maria with a curious look.

"She is dead, *bambina*, whom thou didst hate—'Old Pris,' who beat thee in the street!—dost recollect?"

"Yes, monna! but she knew not what she did, for she drank! Is she dead, poor Old Pris? I am sorry, Monna Maria!"

"Go! you are a strange one!" said the woman. Then, addressing the dwarf, "Who was with her?" she demanded.

"*Him*—she sent for—the rich Jew, that owns all these houses," answered the mulatto; "and a long time they had of it, like old friends. He's to send a coffin, and she'll be buried to-morrow."

"Aha!" muttered the crone, as if annoyed and disappointed at what the dwarf related; and then she mumbled other words which were unintelligible to the listeners. Ninetta watched the workings of her grim face, and said, in a low tone:

"I would like to see poor Old Pris—now she is dead, and cannot speak cross, or curse me, Monna Maria! Come, let us go, and look at her!"

"Go not near the witch," returned Monna Maria, threateningly lifting her finger. "She may have power to harm thee still."

"Nay, I fear her not. Let us go, good Monna Maria. Listen! I will save more money—bright gold—for you!" she added, in a whisper.

"Have thy will, then, *bambina*," said the crone, laying down her needles, and rising from the floor, displaying, as she stood erect, a very tall figure, with gaunt limbs. She then took a long cane from a corner where it stood, and leaning upon it, clasped the extended hand of Ninetta, and, thus supported, hobbled after the dwarf, who led the way. The dotard on the block looked vacantly after them, as they crossed the threshold of the room, and then continued to tell his beads; and the remainder of the family went on with the avocations which had been interrupted.

When the yellow dwarf and his companions reached the murky apartment in which the former dwelt, they found

the negress crouching near the hearth, warming her withered frame over a fire of pine-knots, purchased at a neighboring grocery, the blaze of which penetrated through the room, illuming its filthy corners, and disclosing the corpse of Old Pris, stretched rigidly, as she had died, an hour before. Monna Maria drew nigh the body, and regarded it with attention, while Ninetta remained a little space behind, as if fearful to encounter the malevolent eyes which she remembered to have shrunk from, years before. The mulatto whispered to his mother, and the hag replied in her mumbling monotone, and the two then moved away, as before, to the bundle of rags near the dingy window.

"Monna Maria! do you think Old Pris is gone to heaven?" asked Ninetta, hesitatingly drawing nearer to the dead rag-picker.

"No! she was heathen and heretic," answered the Italian woman, sharply.

"But, maybe to Purgatory, Monna Maria?"

"No! she's lost—her soul is with the devils!—there was no priest to confess her, child, and she died in mortal sin."

"O, dreadful!" murmured Ninetta, with a shudder. "I wish I had known she was to die—I would have gone for Padre Clement, and he should have forgiven all her sins, even if I had to starve till I earned the money. It is so sad to think she must be burned forever, Monna Maria!"

"Tush, child, thou couldst do no good. Ten thousand masses would hardly have been enough to release her from Purgatory, even if she had received the sacrament before

death. And small was the kindness thou owedst her, if the truth were known to thee."

"Nay, Monna Maria; freely did I forgive her ill-nature, in cursing and striving to hurt me, so long ago. She was old and lonesome, and the strong drink made her crazy sometimes."

"Ay, ay!" muttered the old woman, "that's not the wrong—that's not the hurt she did thee, *bambina!* But, peace!—soon, I doubt me, thou'lt know all!"

"What is it, Monna Maria?"

"No matter! There'll be one coming for thee soon, it may be!" said the crone, evasively, stooping beside Old Pris, and pretending to examine the dead features closely. As she did this, a dirty scrap of folded paper, held tightly in the old rag-picker's fingers, suddenly caught her notice, and she hastily drew it out, scanning, with eager glance, some printed letters upon one side. Ninetta saw it, too, and inquired—

"What's that, Monna Maria?"

"Nothing, *bambina!* See! have you not looked at the dead heathen long enough? Come! let us go away."

Saying this, the Italian hastily concealed the slip of paper; and, sustaining herself upon the oak staff which she carried, turned towards the door. Ninetta gave one more sorrowing look at the corpse, and then covered her brilliant eyes with her white hand.

"Oh!" murmured she, "if the poor soul was only in Purgatory! but, alas! to be burned forever and ever!"

"Come, child! what art crying for? She was no friend, little fool!"

"Ah, Monna Maria! she is dead now!" replied Ninetta, and then went slowly away, with her gaunt companion. The mulatto watched them both, till they had disappeared, and then accosted his negress mother.

"Mus' be one o'clock, nigh, old ooman."

"He, he!" mumbled the hag, "one o'clock. Dat dream was a good 'un. Two, tree, and one! Go, boy, and see. He, he!"

She chuckled to herself, hoarsely, and relapsed into incoherent muttering, while her dwarf son moved his grotesque figure away, passing through the door and entry, and out into the narrow street in front of the tenant-houses, till he reached a corner of the block. Here pausing, he descended a few steps, and pushed open the door of a basement-room, over the lintel of which was inscribed the single word "Exchange."

It was a strange place for such a word to appear in—a word suggestive of financial operations that one would hardly expect to meet with in so miserably poor a neighborhood. In flaming letters, near the open doors of fashionable hotels, or down in the haunts of trade and business, where brokers like Mr. Jobson might be supposed to congregate, a word like this, designating the transfer of money, or stocks, or lands, would have had legitimate place and significance; but, in the present locality, over a shattered basement door, surrounded by tottering hovels, it could not but appear, to the reflective observer, as somewhat out of its meridian. Whatever the incongruity might be, however, it certainly did not strike the dwarf mulatto, who, with shambling gait, entered the room,

or office, where were already assembled some score of wretched-looking people, black and white, seated on wooden benches ranged along the walls, and eyeing, with furtive glances, the movements of a greasy-haired young man, who stood at a desk behind what seemed to be a counter, and whose figure was partly concealed by a faded green curtain depending from a wire stretched over his desk to a point near the door. In the middle of the floor stood a cast-iron cylinder stove, red hot, from which a dry heat radiated, filling the place with close and stifling air.

In the countenances of the people who occupied the benches might be traced every variety of expression, resulting from different habits of life. There was the bloated face of one long sunk from all good opinion and social standing by an unrestrained indulgence of his appetites ; there was the low-browed, bulging face of an Irish female, with intelligence scarce one degree removed from mere instinct ; there was the sharp chin and small greedy eyes of one who was a prey to covetousness, and near him the unquiet visage of an habitual gambler. All types of poverty, stupidity, dissipation, and recklessness were visible in the waiting crowd of that basement shop, over the door of which was inscribed the word "Exchange."

"Exchange!" Here came the boy of twelve, the stripling but a few years older, the female child, and the girl just verging on womanhood, which it had been better for her if she never reached. Here staggered in the adult man and woman, with garments ragged, scant, and filthy. Here tottered from the street grey-headed males and females, long since forgetful of human character or duties.

Did they come to "exchange" their want for comfort—their degradation for dignity—their viciousness for morality—their disease for health and life? Alas! no! they brought less of every cruel burden than they were doomed to carry forth again; they entered oftentimes with longing hope, but left that gloomy basement disappointed and despairing.

"Exchange!" Here was the "'change" of the poor, the ignorant, the superstitious! The greasy-haired youth at the desk unrolled a scroll of paper, on which were printed irregular lines of figures, in many gaudy colors, and as he scanned each figure closely, appeared to compare it with other figures entered on the pages of a book before him. Meanwhile, the lookers-on watched his countenance with great anxiety.

"Two—Three—One! A hit!" at length said the young man, measuredly.

"Two—three—one!" was passed from mouth to mouth, and then a half shriek sounded from one corner, and the dwarf mulatto sprang towards the counter, tossing his yellow arms above his head, while his black eyes sparkled like live coals, from excitement.

"A hit!—how much?" he demanded, with breathless impatience.

"Seventy-two dollars, Josh!" answered the clerk, looking up from his scroll. "There's only one other hit today: that's five dollars to Two, Five, Seven."

"Hooray! that's mine, too!" yelled the dwarf Josh. "Them's my numbers."

"Is that so? You're in luck, Josh!" said the clerk.

"If that's the way *you* play policies, we'll have to close up the concern."

Saying this, the greasy-haired youth shut up his book, and the motley inmates of the shop began to crowd about the dwarf, who at once put on an air of importance, listening to their remarks with dignified condescension, while the policy-dealer proceeded to count out, in bank-notes, the amount of money to which, as a winner in this day's lottery, the mulatto was entitled.

"Was it yo'r ould mother that dhramed the won—three—two?" inquired a red-faced Irishwoman, gazing admiringly at the squat figure of the fortunate policy-player.

"She's a dreamer, as knows how to dream," remarked a flat-nosed boy, crowding forward. "Ain't she, Josh!"

The dwarf smiled benignly, pleased at the compliment to his venerable parent, the negress; and then, as the dealer finished counting the money, stretched up his hand to the desk to receive it.

"What are you going to do with all this money, Josh?" asked the policy man, with a pleasant grin. "Take off seven-seventy for our ten per cent., and then you'll have most seventy dollars left. Great deal o' money, Josh. Better let me keep it safe for you."

"No you don't, master," answered the dwarf, with a leer, at which the group around him laughed vociferously, as is customary when a wealthy man delivers himself of a jest. "If you please, I'm a-goin' to use that money, master."

The dealer grinned, and handed a roll of notes to the

mulatto, whereupon that individual re-counted them leisurely, and tucked them securely away under the lining of his ragged waistcoat. Then, looking around upon the gaping spectators, black and white, who had almost forgotten their own disappointments in wondering admiration of the little man whose mother had "dreamed him" such a brace of "hits," Josh held up a dollar that he had separated from the rest of his fortune, and with great politeness, invited all present to take a glass of beer at his expense—a proposition which was received with hearty applause by the policy-players, who thereupon, with loud shouting, followed the yellow dwarf to the adjoining corner grocery.

And this was the signification of "Exchange!" Here, in the dingy basement of a tenant-house, was located one of those pit-falls which waylay the steps of discontented poverty—the shop of a policy-dealer, where, in defiance of the laws, unchecked by authorities, the treacherous lines of fraud are spread to snare the ignorant, thriftless, and superstitious dwellers in surrounding hovels. Here, for the sums of three cents, a dime, a quarter or a half-dollar, the wretched man or woman may select numbers of a lottery on which to stake the miserable pittance earned by some job or other. Here, where chances are nearly all on the side of the dealer, a lucky "hit," or winning, may secure some prize of five or ten, but seldom over one hundred dollars. Such hits, it is true, are rare, as deaths by lightning, but still like *ignes fatui*, they lead expectant worshippers of fortune, day by day, and year by year, till health, means, reputation, life itself, is

sacrificed at last, in the wretched frenzy of a gambler's passion. Not in one lane, or alley, or squalid quarter, but dispersed thickly through the great city, wherever poverty dwells, or want sharpens the desire for gain, or credulity listens to flattering expectations, there may be found the illegal and destructive policy-office, crouching in a sordid nook of some dilapidated square, with miserable people clustered near its entrance, and over its door or window the single word "Exchange."

Chapter XVII.

The Adopted Sisters.

THE funeral was over, and Fanny's mother slept, not in Potter's Field, but amid the shady walks of Greenwood. Bob the Weasel had ridden in a coach, holding Fanny's hand in his, while the good gentleman, Mr. Granby, sat on the opposite seat, talking to them in mild tones, which Bob could never forget, he knew, in all his future days. Fanny had wept, and clung with sobs to his side, when the coffin was taken from the hearse and put away into a dark vault beneath the snowy bank. But Mr. Granby said that, in the spring-time, all that snow would melt away, and make the flowers grow lovelier and fresher on the turf, and that then the children should come again to Greenwood, and weave a garland of the sweetest blossoms, to lay upon the mother's grave. And when, after all was over, they entered the carriage again, the kind old gentleman clasped their cold hands together, and taught them to repeat after himself a prayer to the dear Lord in Heaven, with whom, he trusted, Fanny's mother dwelt in peace ; and Bob the Weasel, after that simple prayer, and in listening to his benefactor's gentle words, felt as if he were younger even than Fanny, and

was only now beginning to perceive and learn some pleasant knowledge of the world in which he had lived unknowing and unknown since babyhood. And when, that evening, the orphan Fanny was left with Margery, the kind seamstress, and Bob returned with Mr. Granby to his new home, to eat heartily of supper, whilst old Samson talked to him of the newsboys, his late comrades, and he related to the wondering negro how often he had slept in areas and under wagons; and when, after that, he went with Samson to Mr. Granby's library, and made a bow to Mrs. George, and then knelt down, with the rest, to evening prayers; and, finally, when he ascended, once more, to his little dormitory, and felt the warm quilts covering him, and a soft pillow under his head, it may well be conceived that Rob Morrison thought himself a very happy boy.

Meantime, Fanny, left with her new friend, sat quiet and reserved on a stool near the seamstress, who plied her needle, as usual. The child was clad in a black frock, which, with her pale features, and eyes swollen by weeping all the day, recalled unceasingly, to Margery's tender sympathy, the sad bereavement of her little charge. Harry, with his brown curls all disordered by play, tilted in his tiny rocking-chair, at one side of the fire-place, holding a purring kitten in his lap; and his large eyes, full of affection, rested by turns upon his sister and the young stranger. At length he asked—

"Sissy Margery, may Fanny be my sissy, too?"

"Why do you wish Fanny to be your sister, dear?"

"'Cause she cries, like you, Margery, and looks so sorrowful."

"And do you think you will make her very happy, if she becomes your sister, Harry?"

"Yes, dear Margery! I'll give her all my playthings, and she may play with kitty all the time; and I'll show her all the letters that I know! Won't that be nice, Fanny?" he asked, looking archly towards the orphan, who smiled faintly, and nodded her poor little head.

"Perhaps Fanny knows her letters," remarked the seamstress; but Harry rejoined, quickly—

"No, indeed, she don't—but I told her I'd teach her this morning, when she was crying, and she said I might —didn't you, Fanny?"

Fanny's eyes filled with tears, and she murmured—

"My mother wanted me to go to school, but I had no frock when I was old enough. Mother tried to teach me a good many times, but she got sick, and then I went out to sell matches."

"Poor child! such a young creature as you to sell matches!" exclaimed Margery.

"Oh, I used to sell a good many, before mother got very sick. Sometimes, I'd make a whole shilling. Rob said 'that was famous luck, though.'"

"Rob! who is Rob?"

"He's a newsboy, please, ma'am. He went to my mother's funeral to-day, and he's gone home with Mr. Granby and Samson."

"Samson was a strong man, in the Bible," here interrupted Harry, with a wise look. "Didn't you ever hear of Samson and the Philistines, Fanny?" asked he, recalling suddenly a recent Sabbath-school lesson. Fanny

answered that she had not, whereat Harry expressed great astonishment, and inquired—

"Don't you know who Moses was?"

"Is he in the Bible?"

"Yes," replied the boy. "He was in Egypt—I should think you'd heard of him."

"O yes! I have. Mother told me about Moses, and about our Saviour," said the little orphan.

"About God?"

"Yes, indeed! and I know how to pray to God! I know 'Our Father!'"

"That's real good," cried Harry, approvingly. "Sister Margery! mayn't Fanny and me pray to Jesus alone to-night?"

"Yes, darling! but I fear you will not recollect your prayers—you have never said them alone."

"O, yes, Margery—I know 'em! Fanny! we must kneel down, you know! Don't you want to?"

"O, yes!" returned the weeping child. "It'll make me feel better—I know it will."

The seamstress laid down the work on which she had been stitching, and leaned her forehead upon her hand. The innocent prattle of the children stirred within her bosom many varying emotions. She thought of the child Fanny, deprived of a mother's love, and of the little care the poor trembler had experienced even in her parent's life—forced out, as she had been, by penury, to seek precarious livelihood upon the great thoroughfares, among busy wayfarers or pleasure-seekers, amid whose changing crowd her baby form might scarce be noticed. And woven ever

with the orphan's unprotected fate arose the bitter fear that Harry, darling of her lonely heart, might thus be cast abroad, so helpless and unfriended. Yet, as if in mild rebuke of all her apprehensions, the artless accents of the little ones beside her, asking permission to address their Heavenly Father, fell upon her ears, and sunk into her heart, with soft and soothing influence. She wiped away the tears that had risen to her eyes, and clasping the children's fingers together, pointed their small hands upward, and with a swelling bosom listened to their simple prayer.

There was no rude interruption now to Fanny's orisons, as there had been when her cold hands were clasped in those of Rob Morrison, beside the rigid corpse of her mother. All was very still in that humble tenant-house apartment, and the childish voices, commingled in sweet distinctness, rose, like fragrant offerings as they were, in the language of that beautiful invocation which, alike for the baby in its cradle and the monarch on his throne, is still, as at the hour when our Saviour breathed it, unequalled in simplicity, in tenderness, and in power. Blessed and ever beautiful it has descended to our day, and still shall the generations of men be calmed and strengthened, through the ages to come, in breathing heavenward, with lowly hearts, the prayer that Jesus offered to "Our Father."

Then Margery kissed her brother and the orphan, and when they had been wrapped in little night gowns, made by her own untiring hands, she said "good-night" to both, with another kiss, and led them away to the small chamber.

"Sissy! please leave the door open!" said Harry, calling after her from beneath the warm coverlid.

"Yes, dear Harry!—go to sleep!"

But Harry was not yet prepared to close his dark brown eyes; and his sister, when she had resumed her sewing, could hear, for half an hour, the whispering voices of the children. But at last the murmur grew still, and Margery, bending over the dim candle, which was her only light, pursued her nightly toil.

Many feet passed and repassed her room, as the seamstress sat, silent and thoughtful, at her task; feet of drunken men, staggering through the dark passages, and of weary laborers, returned from work, slowly mounting the steep staircase. At length, a light footstep paused at the door-sill, and a low knock startled Margery from her reflections. She opened the door, and in a moment was clasped in the arms of a sad-faced girl, clad in black, who entered hurriedly. "Margaret!" "Emily!" were the only words spoken, and then the visitor fell, weeping, upon the neck of the seamstress.

"My poor girl! what has happened?" asked Margery, tenderly, and pressing her lips to the other's forehead. "Your mother" ——

"She's dead!—she's dead! Oh, Margaret—I am all alone in the world!" exclaimed Emily, in a voice choked with sobs, as she clung convulsively to her friend's bosom.

"Poor child!—dear Emily! Come, my poor girl, sit down!" cried the seamstress, kissing the orphan again and again, and leading her gently to a chair, while her own

tears began to flow, and her voice trembled with emotion. "There, dear! lay your head on my lap."

She sat down beside the maiden, then, and twined her arms lovingly about her neck. Emily, meanwhile, bowed her head upon her friend's knees, while low moans broke incessantly from her lips, and gushing tears relieved her overburdened heart. It was some moments before this burst of sorrow, to which, upon the breast of her sympathizing companion, Emily unrestrainedly gave way, was calmed sufficiently to admit of speech. But, at last, the paroxysm became subdued, and then the brief story of bereavement was poured into ears as attentive, and responded to by a heart as kind, as heaven ever permitted to console an orphan. And, as the sweet, though tearful face of Emily was uplifted to that of her friend, and the latter's meek eyes looked down with unspeakable pity, there fell also an influence of calm and confidence upon the orphan's spirit, and she felt that she was not all alone in the wide world.

"Oh! Emily! there has been death here, too, my child!" said the seamstress, after a pause. "Death and orphanhood, also! A little child, motherless, and without a friend who knows aught concerning her, is sleeping in that room with my own poor Harry! Ah! dear! we do not know how many orphans, like yourself, are weeping, at this very hour, over the cold remains of their last and nearest friend on earth.

"'Tis true, dear Margaret," replied Emily, endeavoring to staunch her tears. "But, oh! it is hard to bear! No friends!—O, mother! mother!"

Once more her head drooped, and sobs broke painfully from her breast. Margaret gently laid her hand upon the mourner's hair, that, loosed from its folds, fell in disordered masses, upon her shoulders, which, contrasted with the black stuff dress she wore, appeared like alabaster in their whiteness.

"Dear Emily!" said the seamstress, "is not our Heavenly Father the orphan's friend! Does not that thought console you, dear?"

Emily raised her tearful eyes again. "It does—it does!" she answered. "Dear Margaret, your voice seems like poor mother's. I do feel confidence in God! I know He will not desert me!"

"There whispers your dear mother's spirit, Emily. Perhaps, indeed, it hovers near us, listening to our words, before it wings its upward way to peace eternal. Emily! *my* mother, you know, died but two short years ago, and I have loved since to believe that her guardian care attends me. She was your mother's friend, Emily! and perhaps, even now, as we are weeping together, our mothers are embracing in heaven, and looking down in love upon their children. Is it not a sweet thought, Emily?"

"O, my sister! my dear sister!" murmured the orphan.

"Sister, indeed, darling! Let us be so to each other! for we are both fatherless and motherless!"

The two friends tenderly embraced, and Emily whispered:—"I have always looked upon you, Margaret, as an elder sister, and now I feel that God has made you so indeed."

For some moments, then, they remained silent, twined by each other's arms, their hearts beating together, and tears mingling on their wet cheeks. Still the feet of tenants sounded from without, stumbling through the passages of Kolephat College ; still, at intervals, doors were closed, with jarring clang, in the distance, and voices of men and women, intermingled occasionally with coarse laughter, echoed from neighboring rooms, or from the alley below—all distinctly audible through the dilapidated shells, which served for walls or partitions ; for, in a crowded tenant-house, no quiet ever reigns, save when midnight sleep brings temporary silence. But, in the deep abstraction of their sympathies, the sisters, as they now felt themselves, heeded not the outward world, but, listening with their inner natures, seemed to hear the tones of angel voices, and the wings of heavenly messengers, fluttering through superior ether, in a life beyond and far above the homes of poverty and woe.

"Come, sister !" at length said Margaret, when the two again unclasped their arms. "Come, and see poor Harry and my other orphan !" She rose, in saying this, and taking the candle in her hand, led Emily to the bedroom, where reposed the children. "Look !" she continued, shading the light with her hand, and turning down the coverlid, disclosing the two little ones, locked in each other's arms, like babes of one mother. Harry's brown curls were intertwined with Fanny's silky hair, and the flushed and healthful cheek of the boy pressed closely against the sweet but paler face of his new companion.

"How beautiful they are!" said Emily, stooping to kiss the sleeping infants.

"The poor child's mother died, without a soul near to assist her. No one appears to know anything about them, as they were tenants here but a few weeks! O Emily! it is terrible to think of such a thing as to die utterly friendless, and without a human being to offer a last prayer!"

Margaret turned from the bed, as she spoke, hastily wiping her eyes, to which tears were again springing, in spite of her fortitude.

When they were again seated together in the outer room, Emily, now soothed into calmness, related to her friend the incidents following her mother's death, embracing the loss of her purse, with nearly all her scanty stock of money. The undertaker's assistant, on returning with the coffin, had been boldly charged, by Mrs. Dumsey, with the perpetration of the theft, which he as stoutly denied, and retorted so defiantly upon the nurse, with threats of suing her for slander, that she, albeit of legal experience, was fain to drop the unsupported accusation, and content herself with sundry epithets, muttered before the lad, and loudly repeated in the bosom of her family, which, applied to the cadaverous youth, attested her belief in his possession of all the crimes and vices usually dispersed over an entire State-prison calendar; ending with the declaration, enforced by emphasis, that "the gallus would never get its due till that same young villyan danced on nothin', with his shoes on."

Nevertheless, the good Mrs. Dumsey, in her indignation against the wicked youth, who, she averred, would "steal

the coppers off his own father's eyes, and never wink at it," did not lose sight of the fact that her young neighbor's scanty fund remaining was insufficient to meet the expenses necessary to her mother's funeral. On the contrary, in her blunt, yet kindly way, as soon as the undertaker's assistant had again departed, Mrs. Dumsey descended to her own quarters, and soon returned with a canvas bag, in which was snugly tied a little hoard of silver, in federal halves and quarters of the dollar, the accumulation of many years of thrifty savings. This, with much honest pride exhibited in her face, she announced as "her own, and nobody's else, and kept for rainy days," and then, and without more ceremony, proceeded to inform the orphan, that "Mrs. Dumsey, and Mrs. Dumsey alone, for the sake of she that's dead and gone, and a good woman she was, and as kind a neighbor as ever breathed the breath o' mortal life, was a-going to bury the Widow Marvin at her own expense, and two carriages, and not a cent for Emily to trouble herself to pay." This determination, resolutely communicated to her young neighbor, was received with tearful gratitude, and a hope expressed by Emily that she might soon be able to repay the unexpected kindness, which relieved her of a load of uneasiness at that hour; to which the generous nurse replied, that "she needn't give herself a morsel of trouble," adding, with a smile, to raise the orphan's spirits, that "when she should marry a coach-and-four, she might refund the same." All this, with many tears, and blessings invoked upon her kindly neighbor, Emily now related to Margaret, concluding her recital by inform-

ing her that her mother's funeral would take place upon the morrow, which was the Sabbath, and earnestly requesting her new sister to accompany her parent's remains to their last resting-place. The seamstress promised to be ready; and then, after another embrace of her friend, Emily prepared to depart.

"It is nine o'clock," she said, "and good Mrs. Dumsey is waiting up for me. O Margaret! I am so sorry to go away from you. Bless you! bless you, dear friend! for *you* are a blessing to every one! O! I wish I were like you!"

"We are to be sisters, you know," said Margery.

"And we must live together, for the future, Margaret! "You must come with me. It will be more comfortable for you than this place, and we can be so quiet together, all our lives."

"Perhaps so," said the seamstress, with a sad smile; for she felt, even at that instant, a sharp pain in her side, which made her grow faint for a moment.

"O, indeed, yes, dear Margaret! we *must* be together! Now, good-night, sister! God bless you forever!"

"May the Almighty have you in his keeping, dear Emily!" answered Margaret; and then, with another kiss, the two friends separated, and the seamstress returned to her task. But her eyes were blinded with suffusing tears, her breath grew painfully thick; and she bowed her poor head upon the table, her heart heavy with sorrow, of which the world knew nothing.

Chapter XVIII.

Margery's Sabbath-School.

THE Sabbath day, with holy and ameliorating influences, dawned over the great city. A blessed calmness ushered in the sun, which rose unclouded, shimmering over the smooth waters of the two broad rivers that belt the metropolis, and clothing all the rolling billows of the bay with radiant light. It was one of those mild days which come in midwinter, to thaw the heavy snows, and unlock for a space the waters that the hand of frost had sealed; one of those spring-like days, with clear blue sky and soft south-western wind, usually the presage of renewed storms, and seeming as if Winter paused, relaxing his rigor, for a space, perhaps, to gather up the scattered elements of future warfare. On such a day, in the country, you may note the flash of multitudinous rivulets, emancipated from their icy chains, and dancing musically through softened meadows, or over moss-clad rocks; you may hear, occasionally, the quick twitter of a bird, half cheated into a welcome-song to spring! and it may be that you can discern small blades of tender grass springing into short-lived greenness, to die, like too early bud-

ding hopes, nipped by a cold reality. And, as you pause on the hill-side, the peals of Sabbath bells will fall upon your ear, with mellower music, as if in unison with sun-lit heaven and smiling earth.

In the city, on such a mild mid-winter Sabbath, you may see, should you pass along the water front, thousands of men and boys wandering up and down the wharves, looking at ships and their cargoes piled upon the piers, watching steamboats plying over the water, or gazing idly out to the pilot boats sailing in the bay, to the islands at the harbor mouth, and to the tall lighthouses far in the hazy distance. Crowds of listless people saunter on the Battery walks, and other crowds stand at corners of the streets, near open doors of drinking shops, while separate groups sit upon boxes, anchors, and bulk-heads, hour after hour, watching the river life. Often, unhappily, you may hear the laugh of young men at some low jest uttered by a comrade, and oftener still an oath or ribald word from lips on which the down of early manhood is but just appearing. For these young men, and for throngs of boys at riotous play upon the piers, and for the idlers wandering up and down, there is no sanctity in the day—no Sabbath feeling, elevating heart and mind. They hear the church-chimes, floating from tall belfries over the city, but no theme of peaceful thought blends with the aerial music ; they behold blue skies above them, and feel the southwest breeze, but no chord of prayerful gratitude is touched in their hearts, responsive to the loveliness of nature. Strange and very sad that such multitudes of people, in a Christian city, should go forth upon so bright

a Sabbath day, without one Sabbath feeling stirring in their breasts!

But, if we would closely observe most of these Sabbath loiterers upon wharves and at street corners—haggard-looking men, with jaded and vacant faces; rough youths, in flashy secondhand clothes, with rank-smelling cigars held between their discolored teeth; and children of every age, boys and girls, from the precocious urchin of a half-dozen years, to the one just verging into adolescence; if we would follow them, as the night draws on, to their dwelling-places, and mark the influences and associations pervading and surrounding such abodes, we should not experience much difficulty in discovering the *reason* and *cause* of the Sabbath idling and desecration which we had witnessed. We should behold children reared in localities of filth and disease—with vice and dissipation constantly before their eyes; born of parents steeped in the dregs of poverty and wretchedness, their earliest habit beggary, their first lesson profanity, their constant experiences hunger, and cold, and neglect; we should see these children growing in years without ever hearing the name of their Heavenly Father, save when coupled with horrible curses—see them swarming out upon the wharves and streets, by day, and burrowing in hovels, worse than the kennels of dogs, at night—see them merging into youth, as hangers-on of fire-companies, or river-thieves, or attendants of bar-rooms and gambling-houses, or banded together as fighters and political bravos; see their sisters, born in the same hovels, reared amid like scenes—learning, with feminine quickness, the worst lessons at the

tenderest years, and going on, step by step, from infancy to prime, in ways of wickedness that lead to early death. All this we should behold; and, oh! Father of Mercy! we should see civilization standing, even like the listless wharf-loiterers, gazing abroad upon great ships with stores of wealth, and upon pilot-boats, and lighthouses built up for the protection of commerce—while not a glance of its eyes is turned toward the human beings perishing, soul and body, in the great city behind, with no lighthouse to show to them the rocks and quicksands of life—no pilots to lead them away from the gulf of despair into which they and their children are falling.

Their children! O Christian fathers and mothers! think of the kind of children that must inevitably be born unto the dwellers among filth, dissipation, disease, and starving squalor!—think of the malaria poisoning body, and the evil example influencing mind, and the debased associations corrupting heart!—think of future communities physically weakened and morally depraved by the vicious habits of the present generation—habits almost inseparable from the condition of life out of which no helping hand seeks to rescue them—habits grounded in dark and filthy abodes—nursed amid crowded localities—fostered by want of air, of light, of water, of room wherein to move and dwell—habits, to sum up all, which never can be broken and eradicated until that blot upon civilization is removed from our midst—the crowded, reeking, pestiferous tenant-house of the poor.

A quiet Sabbath morning, even in Kolephat College!

for most of the male occupants were out of doors, strolling upon the wharves, or congregated at groggeries, imbibing drugged spirits, which, inflaming their blood, would bring them home at dusk riotous and quarrelsome, to banish all quiet from the tenant-house thenceforward through the night. It might be that a stray denizen of the College would find himself in a church upon that calm Sunday, but such occurrence, should it transpire, were strange indeed; for, in truth, as I have said, it is from tenant-houses, such as that in charge of Peleg Ferret, that the crowds of Sabbath-idlers go forth, at morning, one by one.

Betimes, in the early day, Margaret the seamstress had set her humble home in order, putting away the work that had occupied her through the weary week. The little ones received their breakfast, and were rendered tidy for the Sabbath, and then the boy, as was his wont, brought to his sister's little stand a well-worn Bible, from which Margery was accustomed to read some chronicle of godly ones who served the God of Israel or, more favorite theme of Harry, the story of our blessed Lord, who walked the sea, discoursed upon the mount, and died unmurmuring on the cruel cross. On this occasion, Harry seemed perplexed concerning what should be the subject of his sister's lesson, and Margery said—

"Does Harry remember what was read on Sunday last?"

"O, yes!" he answered. "It was little Joseph that you read about, and how his wicked brothers throwed him into a pit."

"And do you recollect what afterwards became of Joseph?"

"Yes, Margery! and about Benjamin, and all."

"Then, Harry, perhaps you can sit down here with Fanny, and tell her how the Lord took care of Joseph, in Egypt, among strangers, and made him a great and good man."

"Please, sissy, I'll try," said Harry. And then, seating Fanny in his own little chair, the boy leaned against his sister, as she sat by her table, and began in his simple, childish way, to rehearse that beautiful narrative which has charmed the hearts of children through so many ages of the past. Fanny, very quiet and attentive, listened to the tale, her sweet face eloquent with feeling, as the strange vicissitudes of the Hebrew youth's life were gradually unfolded to her wondering mind. The orphan's hands were clasped together, as she sat, her eyes fixed earnestly upon the countenance of her new friend, and thus, for the first time in all her infant life, the words of Sabbath teaching fell upon her ears. At last, the quaintly-told, but all-absorbing history was ended; and then, Margaret, stooping fondly over her brother, to kiss his clear forehead, said—

"You have a famous memory, Harry, and must pay great attention to what you hear me read. Do you think, Fanny, that you can remember the story of Joseph?"

"I think so," said the orphan, hesitatingly. "But, oh! if Rob was here, *he* could recollect it all."

"And Rob *is* here!" cried a jubilant voice, at that moment, as the door of Margaret's room was flung sud-

denly open, and the Weasel bounded forward, and then abruptly paused, looking extremely foolish, as he encountered the surprised look which the seamstress directed towards him.

Fanny would hardly have recognized her newsboy friend, had not his voice assured her of his identity; for the kindness of Mr. Granby, conjoined with Samson's care, had produced a complete metamorphosis in his appearance, even since the day before. A suit of brown, the first new clothes the boy had ever known, a pair of stout boots, and cloth cap, and, more than all, a white shirt-collar, turned neatly over his vest, were sufficient, indeed, to disguise from ordinary gaze the weird and ragged urchin who had slept so lately, with his fellow-dwarfs, half-buried by the falling snow. In truth, the lad seemed strange even to himself, and though a sudden impulse had caused him to introduce himself so wildly into Margery's apartment, he now stood where he had stopped, much frightened at his temerity, and doubtful what apology could be sufficient for his rudeness. Fanny, however, quickly interposed, exclaiming, as she caught the eye of Margaret—

"It's Rob, please."

"I come to see that little girl," cried the Weasel, naïvely pointing to his friend. "Please, ma'am, I didn't go for to jump in so, but I heerd Fanny say, 'If Rob was here,' and—so—and so—I couldn't wait to knock."

"No matter, Rob," said the seamstress, kindly. "Come here, now, and let us shake hands. Fanny has spoken to me of her friend Robert, and so we are pretty well acquainted. There," she continued, as she drew the boy

forward, "you shall sit down here, beside your little friend, and Harry, who is my brother, and we shall have a real Sabbath-school. Eh, Harry?—shall I be the teacher?"

Harry laughed, and clapped his hands, and then ran and brought a cricket, for the stranger-child to sit on.

"You haven't got nary seat yourself," remarked the Weasel, hesitating.

"Yes, this cricket is big enough for two," replied Harry; "and you may sit in my chair, and I'll sit here, with Fanny."

"Maybe, Fanny would rather sit with Robert," said the sister; and Fanny's eyes seemed to express the same thing. So Harry led the young orphan to a seat beside her other friend, upon the cricket, and then drew his own chair close to Fanny.

"There, sissy—we're a class," he exclaimed, merrily; but at this moment a knock was heard, and Rob said "Mr. Granby is a-comin'."

Mr. Granby was accompanied by Samson, and Samson brought a basket, covered by a napkin, and with a newspaper pinned around it, in which basket were niceties that Samson himself had selected in Mr. Granby's storeroom, by and with the consent of Mrs. George the housekeeper. Margaret, after shaking hands with the old gentleman, and replying to his thoughtful inquiries concerning her health, received the basket from the negro's hand, and laid it away; at the same time reaching chairs for her visitors.

"The little ones were about giving me a new vocation,"

said Margaret, noticing that Mr. Granby was curiously observing the three children, seated in a row together. "I was to open school for them."

"Ah, indeed!" returned the old gentleman, pleasantly smiling. "And it is a noble vocation."

"Sister Margery can teach better than the school-ma'am," here said Harry, turning his sunny face towards Mr. Granby. "She knows all about everything, I *do* believe!"

Margery smiled and told her brother he was a chatter-box; whereupon Harry qualified his declaration, affirming that "Sister Margery knew all *he* wanted to know." Samson the negro showed his white teeth, in great enjoyment of the child's archness, and both Rob and Fanny looked as if they agreed with the happy brother in admiration of that pale-faced woman with the dark, mild eyes.

Mr. Granby remained a moment or two silent, as if revolving some thought in his mind, that had just occurred to him.

"Truly, Miss—Miss" ——

"Winston," added Margery.

"Truly, Miss Winston," said the old gentleman, "when I passed along the street below, and through the entries of this house, and saw the crowd of neglected-looking children swarming at every corner, I wondered if there were no teachers in the world, to look after their infant souls."

Margaret shook her head, and looked at Harry, with a sorrowful expression.

"*You* could teach 'em, sissy," exclaimed the brother.

"I believe the little fellow is right," rejoined Mr. Granby. "It is the benevolent and christian spirit that can best teach these poor abandoned ones. Samson! what was it I remarked, as we walked through the alley below?"

"You said dere ought to be a big government schule 'stablished, Massa Granby, for de trainin' up of all de poor children."

"And what did you reply, my old friend?"

"Lor' bress you, massa, what I says doesn't 'mount to nothin'. I jes' t'ought dere ought to be a skule in ebbery alley an' tenant-house—dat's all."

"And you were right, Samson!" cried his master, warmly. "It is here, in the midst of these habitations, that reforming influences should be set at work; here, in the tenant-house, ought to be planted a school, wherein to gather, as in a sheepfold, the poor lambs who are outcast from the flock of society. Yes, Samson! the miserable and squalid offspring of these poor people might thus be made infant missionaries, to carry to their depraved homes an influence and power of good, whereby whole families should be reformed and elevated."

The old gentleman, as he uttered this speech, had risen from his chair, and stood, with hand outstretched, and eyes fixed upon his sable servant and friend. A lovely expression rested on his venerable face, and shone in his clear eye, and Margaret Winston, as she regarded him, and marked the mild benevolence that radiated from his brow, could not but recall the words of Holy Writ—

"Behold an Israelite, indeed, in whom there is no guile."

"But, we are forgetting our school here," returned Mr. Granby, with a gentle smile, as he turned towards the seamstress. "Here are our three patient pupils in waiting, and, if you please, Miss, Samson and myself, who are both near our second childhood, will add our docility to theirs. Will not my young friend Harry accept us as fellow-scholars in his sister's school?"

Harry glanced up in Margery's face, ready to laugh outright at what appeared to him a very comical suggestion; but his sister's serious look checked all merriment in a moment.

"Please, Margery," he said, "won't you tell your pretty story about Moses?—not from the Bible, but the way you tell me about the King's daughter."

"Moses! Oh! I'd like to hear about Moses, Rob," whispered Fanny, softly, to her companion on the cricket.

"I'd like to hear about the King's daughter," replied the Weasel. "Who was Moses, Fan?"

"He was a good man, Rob, in the Bible."

"Well, I'd like to hear about him, too."

"Won't you tell about Moses, Margery?" pleaded Harry.

"Do, by all means, Miss Winston," said Mr. Granby; and thus encouraged, Margery drew her chair close to the children, and began her paraphrase of that tenderest incident of old-time Scripture history. Meantime, Samson the negro leaned forward, with one sable hand raised

to his listening ear, while his master watched the maiden's speaking face with growing interest. And this was Margery's story of the Hebrew Foundling :—

"The last glow of sunset," said the seamstress, in a tone of exceeding softness, "the last glow of sunset was silvering the temple-roofs of a beautiful city ; trembling upon the shapes of great statues, hewn out of dark rock, that filled the colonnaded streets ; and flashing redly back from brazen gates, whereon were carved strange symbols of an ancient race of men. Through the wide avenues, that were shaded by long rows of date-trees, there moved a procession of males and females, some of them carrying garlands of flowers in their hands, others holding aloft urns made of brown earth, and others, again, as they walked, swinging backwards and forwards small silver censers, in which rare perfumes were burning, sending up clouds of sweet smoke upon the evening air. This procession was a company of priests and priestesses, who were going down to the banks of a great river, in order to perform a religious ceremony ; for, in those days, and in that ancient country, the people were not Christians, but heathens, who worshipped idols of wood, and brass, and stone."

"They didn't know any better, Fanny," whispered Harry, as his sister paused a moment. "That was the reason." But Margaret went on :

"As the procession moved forward," she said, "towards the city gate, a great many richly-dressed people joined in it, swelling its numbers very much. Among these were

tall soldiers, with spears, and bows, and shields, and also portly merchants, who wore long, flowing garments of white and purple cloth, and many ladies, too, arrayed in costly stuffs, with light head-dresses, from which thin, gossamer-looking veils were drooping. Besides these, a great number of children walked along, between the company of priests, some of them led by their parents' hands, and others gambolling by themselves. All the people in this procession were clothed very handsomely, and seemed to be, as they really were, the wealthiest and most favored people of the city.

"But as the procession passed along through the broad streets, and outside of the gates, there were great multitudes of people who did not take part in the ceremonies, but, rather, appeared to be fearful of approaching the priests, and soldiers, and merchants. These multitudes were composed of men and women, like the procession, but they were not clothed in fine raiment—indeed, most of them had scarcely any garment to cover themselves—and they had no garlands of flowers, or gilded urns, and no silver censers to swing; neither did they sing any joyful songs, like the company of worshippers. On the contrary, some of these poor people carried upon their heads and shoulders great loads of stones and clay, staggering all the time, with fatigue; others stooped down, almost doubled, digging deep pits, and scooping out earth, in order to make channels to the river-bed; others clambered up ladders, with much pain and difficulty, bearing burdens of sun-baked brick, which they piled up into walls and ramparts on the river-banks, and with which,

also, they raised lofty structures of masonry, high above all the city temples."

"Dear me!" here interrupted Mr. Granby, who had been listening very earnestly to Margaret's description; "they are doing the same things now-a-days. But, pardon me, Miss! Go on, please!"

"On every side of the poor people, who were laboring so hard, fierce-looking men were stationed, holding whips in their hands. These men were the task-masters, who forced the laborers to exert themselves oftentimes beyond their strength, so that many of the latter continually sank down, and died under the heavy loads which they were carrying. But the saddest thing of all was to see great numbers of children among the toiling people, weeping, and bitterly lamenting, because their fathers and mothers were so miserable, and because they constantly fell down and died from severe toils. But nobody appeared to take any notice of these children, so that they went aside, by themselves, and began to creep near to the procession of rich people; and then, whenever they could do so without being seen, they would run up, slyly, and snatch away some of the merchants' jewels, or some ornament of the ladies, and very often they would cunningly entice the little children of the merchants, to steal the money and costly goods of their fathers and mothers. In this manner, the children of the poor people became a plague and terror to all the wealthy people who were in the procession."

"O my!" ejaculated Bob the Weasel. "What did they do to 'em? Wasn't there no p'licemen?"

"Hush!" said Harry—"you'll hear."

"Then came tall men, with staves," pursued Margery, "and these men seized the little children, and shut them up in dark cells, near the city gates, or else tied weights to their ankles, and condemned them to labor, like the other slaves, in deep pits and on the walls. For in reality all poor people were slaves in that ancient land, because of the pride and hardheartedness of the merchants, and because of the neglect of the priests, who would not hearken to the prayers of those unfortunates."

"I am afraid such hardheartedness and neglect are not entirely the sins of ancient lands," said Mr. Granby, thoughtfully.

"Well, the procession moved grandly down to the river side," resumed the teacher; "and there the priests, and merchants, and maidens, and beautiful children, sang loud songs, and threw their garlands of flowers upon the water, and swung their censers on the banks, making clouds of sweet incense. But the people behind, who toiled and were scourged, and the weeping children of these poor ones, dared not approach the priests, but stood afar off, lifting up their voices in lamentation."

Margaret paused in her recital, and looked at the newsboy, who sat with his right hand clasped by Fanny, whose own right hand rested on Harry's neck. Bob the Weasel appeared strangely absorbed in the narrative to which he was listening; his lips were parted, his eyes raised steadfastly, and as the seamstress became silent, a deep sigh escaped his breast.

"Do you understand the story, Robert?" asked Mr. Granby, noticing the boy's earnest attention.

"I think there's jes' sich poor folks now, please sir!" said the Weasel. "I *know* there's children jes' like them."

Mr. Granby, as he heard this remark, looked more closely at Rob Morrison's face than ever he had done before, and was struck with the lines of thoughtfulness that appeared in it. Since the transformation which the lad's outward person had undergone, much of the weazen expression had departed, and what seemed before a look of mingled craft and recklessness now was sobered into a serious cast. The small eyes still glittered with their old sharpness, and there was a curve about the lip muscles that told of an impatient temperament; but, after all, in his new garb, the Weasel would not have figured to disadvantage among a score of ordinary school-boys from a much higher walk in life than that to which he, poor child, had been accustomed. Mr. Granby was evidently pleased with his observation of Rob, as well as with the latter's remark, and nodded his head to Samson, to indicate his satisfaction; whereat the acute negro displayed his dazzling teeth, as in agreement with his master. Then all grew attentive again, as Margery resumed her story.

"After the company had remained for some time near the river, and when the priests had concluded their ceremonies, the grand procession was formed again, and returned homeward to the city. And as it entirely disappeared within the gates, there came a poor woman, walking slowly and cautiously down towards the river-banks. This woman, it seemed, was one of the poor toiling people, because her countenance was very sorrowful, and because she came out of the ranks of children who were weeping

afar off. She held in her arms a little baby, which she constantly kissed and clasped to her bosom, sighing all the while ; and, at last, when the sun was going down, she took a little cradle that she had made out of reeds which grew by the water-side, and placed the dear little infant in that frail vessel. Then, watching to see that nobody was near, she pushed the cradle of reeds away, and let it float down on the river's bosom."

"Oh ! what did she do that for ?" cried Fanny, with an appealing look from Margaret to Mr. Granby, and then to Rob Morrison.

"It was to save the poor baby's life," said the seamstress. "There was a very cruel and unjust man, who was king of that country, and he had given orders to have every little boy belonging to the poor people killed, as soon as he was born ; and this dear infant's mother hoped that her baby might be saved, if she let it float away on the river, because, she thought, perhaps, the wicked soldiers might not know it was one of the poor babies that the king had ordered them to kill."

"O ! that was it !" exclaimed Rob—he and Fanny appearing to be much relieved.

"So, my dear children," went on the seamstress, "the mother let the cradle, with her dear child in it, glide away on the waters, although, you may be sure, she was very much frightened, thinking of all the monsters that lived in the river. But she was a very good woman, and trusted in God ; and so she felt, although this little naked child of the poor outcast people was exposed to so many dangers, that the Almighty was watchful and would be a

Father to the cast-away. And thus, indeed, it turned out; for, at that very hour, when the child floated on the water, there came thither the King's daughter, with all her maidens, to bathe in the river; and, presently, the princess spied the cradle, and sent one of her attendants to bring it to her. You may be sure, this princess, whose name, we are told, was Thermuthis, was much astonished to find the babe; but she was very kindhearted, and, seeing how helpless it looked, she resolved not to abandon the poor little foundling. It was the Lord who put it into her heart to be so good, for it is He who inspires all generous thoughts in the mind. So, then, the king's daughter called one of the women who was standing near, and said: 'Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages!' And the woman took the baby, to nurse it, and bring it up, under protection of the friendly princess; and the child grew to be a great and learned man, and a servant of the Almighty."

"It was Moses!" cried Harry, who had remained silent a long period, and now broke out suddenly, addressing Fanny.

"Bress de Lord! yes!—it was Moses!" said Samson, quite as much interested as the children.

"I wish I knowed Moses!" whispered Bob the Weasel, to Fanny, though not so low but that Margery overheard him.

"Sometime I will tell you more about him," said the seamstress, kindly. "How he was a great leader and law-giver in Israel, and led all the poor people, his coun-

trymen, out of Egypt, and away from the cruel king who oppressed them."

Mr. Granby remained for a few moments without speaking, absorbed, apparently, in thought; then, rising slowly, the old gentleman approached the seamstress, and took her thin, transparent hand within his own.

"Yes, dear Miss Winston," he said, solemnly. "It was Moses, the great Israelitish lawgiver, who led his countrymen out of the Land of Egypt, and out of the House of Bondage! Oh! that the beautiful ones who are as princesses and daughters of kings in this our favored land, would do unto the outcast children of our day, even as Thermuthis, the daughter of Pharaoh, did unto Moses, the foundling child!—ay, even as you are striving to do, Miss Winston, unto these neglected babes before you. All around us are the naked and destitute, appealing to our pity, but how few, indeed, respond to the cry of the perishing. Miss! may I ask of you to aid me in a work which I would fain set about at once?"

Mr. Granby fixed his benevolent gaze upon the seamstress, as he said this, with an expression of sympathy and esteem that caused Margaret's eyes to droop modestly to the floor; but, as if in relief of her embarrassment, the speaker continued:

"I see you here, Miss, humble and patient, but toiling almost beyond your strength—this child dependent upon your exertions and care! Heaven has blessed me with means which may be usefully employed, and I have been thinking that, if the neglected children of this poor neighborhood could be brought together under *your* teaching

and influence, much good might be done in forming their young character."

The old gentleman spoke slowly, and in low tones, holding Margery's hand, which trembled in his clasp.

"And, so, I have been thinking, that you might put aside this toilsome occupation of the needle, which is undermining your health, as can be plainly seen, and if a class could be gathered together, as you were playfully saying—in short, Miss, if you could have a little school, and teach these poor children of your neighborhood—would it not be a good work?"

"Indeed, indeed, it would sir!" cried Margaret, earnestly.

"Then, if you like, it shall be done!" said the old gentleman, enthusiastically. "A school we will have, here, in your room, or wherever you like; and the expenses it shall be my privilege to bear. You shall be teacher, my dear Miss Winston, and I'll be—committee-man."

Harry Winston opened his eyes very widely, half unable to comprehend the proposition; but when he saw tears flowing down his sister's cheeks, and beheld her warmly shaking Mr. Granby's hand, he seemed to catch the spirit of the scene at once, and, springing suddenly from his chair, ran and caught the visitor's disengaged hand—

"Is sister Margery to have a school, really?" he asked, breathlessly.

"Yes, dear Harry."

"And me, and Fanny, and Rob—all to be scholars?"

"Yes, Harry! and you are to bring all the poor little boys and girls you can find, who will promise to behave well."

"Oh, how nice that'll be!" exclaimed the child.

"So it's settled!" said Mr. Granby, with great satisfaction. "Samson! does it suit you, my good boy?"

"Not 'xactly," answered the negro, shaking his head.

"Why, Samson, what have you to say?" asked Mr. Granby, somewhat astonished, and rather grieved, at his servant's apparent disapproval.

"'Skuse me, Massa Granby—but 'sposin' de children won't come to skule?"

"Bless me! I did not think of that?" said the old gentleman.

"Dey is berry cur'ous, dose children," continued Samson, rubbing his head. "An' if dere was such a ting as to gib 'em suthin' to eat, an' suthin' to take away home, for de ole folks to eat, whenebber dey was good children, an' larned de lesson—kind o' 'ward o' good behavior, like, massa—you know" ——

"You are right, Samson!" replied his master. "The instruction that is listened to, upon an empty stomach, may be thanklessly received. The poor children have physical as well as mental wants. Samson, I thank you for the hint, and it shall be acted upon. We will send to the highways, and bring in the hungry in body and soul, to eat of that which we have. And now, Miss Winston, if you would like to read from that blessed book before you, I will afterwards implore a blessing on our undertaking."

Margaret opened the sacred volume, and read from the Gospel of John of that love which is eternal, and of that confidence in God which is omnipotent in life and death. And then the venerable philanthropist knelt down beside

her, in that humble tenant-room, and prayed the Father of all mercies, for His blessing upon the work which they would do. While the alleys and corners around Kolephat College, and all its wretched neighborhood, swarmed with unshaven men, and untidy women, and neglected, quarrelsome children, there were prayer and supplication arising in their midst, from hearts filled with love and compassion even for these outcasts from the family of refined civilization—these dwellers in the Darkness and Bondage of Social Egypt.

Be sure, O Human Heart! the prayer was sanctified unto good in future days!

Chapter XIX.

Kolephat and Ferret.

AT the same hour of the Sabbath morning in which the little group of worshippers knelt in Margery's room, Peleg Ferret, rent-collector of Kolephat College, sat in the library of his employer, engaged in close conversation with the old Hebrew. He had been sent for, hastily, by Mordecai Kolephat, and, like a faithful agent, obeyed with alacrity the summons. As it was Sunday, Mr. Ferret was attired with great regard to fashion ; wearing a blue coat, with rounded skirts and gilt buttons, a yellow-striped waistcoat, and cravat of crimson, spotted with delicate drops of white. His shirt-collar was turned over, and his hair stiff and shining with bears'-grease. He sat, with legs crossed, near Mr. Kolephat's desk, and opposite a large mirror, in which he glanced, at intervals, with apparent self-satisfaction at his own reflected image.

The owner of Kolephat College was wrapped in a dressing-gown somewhat the worse for wear, and from the expression of his countenance, as he leaned back in an easy-chair, regarding his agent, it might be conjectured

that he was in a state of much mental agitation ; for his brow was deeply corrugated, and a nervous trembling could be observed in his eyelids and nether lip, as if unquiet thoughts were passing through his mind.

"Ferret," said the Jew, abruptly, "what did you know about the rag-picker who called herself 'Old Pris?'"

"A dirty old critter—never paid her rent, when she could beg off, or git clear to another house," answered the agent, sententiously.

"You knew her a great many years, Ferret?"

"More'n a dozen, I should say! Allers the same filthy old critter—some folks thought she had money saved, but I never could discover any. Drank a good deal, and policied."

"She bought tickets in the lottery, you mean, Ferret."

"Yes, policied—bought policies ; but never heerd she made any 'hits,'" answered the agent.

"Well, well," said the Jew, impatiently. "You have known her twelve years, you say—did you ever know her to have a family—any children, about her?"

"She!—children?" echoed the agent. "Why, they'd all run away from her, skeered to death!"

Kolephat's countenance fell. "Did she have intercourse with her neighbors—the rag-pickers, or bone-collectors, or the organ-grinders, Ferret?"

"Well, slightly—yes!" said the man, hesitatingly. "'Pears to me, there was an old furrin critter—French woman, or suthin' o' the sort—used to harbor Old Pris—ye-es! ; uess it was an Italian, 'cause she had a parcel o' organ-grinders an' tambourine-g'rls allers 'round."

"And is this Italian you speak of now living?"

"Reckon so—shouldn't wonder if she lived where Old Pris did—thereabouts—you know I haint had charge o' *that* property, Mr. Kolephat."

Ferret uttered the last words in a tone that might signify a gentle sort of complaint that his principal had not yet given him the agency of the crowded tenement buildings wherein Old Pris had breathed her last.

"I think it is hardly six months since that property fell into my possession, Ferret," replied Kolephat, as if he understood the collector's drift.

"Pays?" conjectured Ferret, interrogatively. "Ragpickers ain't the wust sort o' tenants, nohow, Mr. Kolephat!"

"Ferret!" suddenly spoke the Hebrew, and then abruptly paused, apparently relapsing into reflection; whereupon Ferret began industriously to twirl his hat upon one knee, at the same time throwing his head to one side, and lifting his right eyebrow, as if to say, "Well—here I am waiting, old fellow—what have you got to say?"

"Ferret," at length the Jew resumed, "I have something to tell you, and something for you to do, which, I am convinced, your shrewdness and perseverance will not fail to accomplish, and for which you shall be well rewarded."

Kolephat paused a second time, and Ferret pricked up his ears like a hound, much interested by the concluding words of his employer's remark.

"Ten years ago, I was richer than I am now, Ferret, in possessing a priceless jewel. That jewel was stolen

from me by the rag-picker, Old Pris ; and has never been restored to me. I wish you to find it."

The agent opened his eyes widely, staring at the old man, whom he began to suspect was wandering in his mind, in spite of the calm tone in which he spoke.

"What, *me !*—me find it ?" ejaculated the rent-collector. "Ten years is a long time—and she's sold it, or pawned it, no doubt. How much was it wu'th, Mr. Kolephat ?"

"Stop, Ferret ! It was not a jewel, such as this paltry stone !" cried the Jew, extending his long, pale hand, on one of the fingers of which glittered a first-water diamond. "It was a human being—a soul, Ferret, in the body of an infant child ! It is this I lost, Ferret, this which I would have you seek for me, and I will well reward you, if you succeed, as if it were the chief jewel of a king's crown that you restored to me."

The old man had risen, as he was speaking, and now stood before Ferret, with one arm extended, while the gown which he wore, depended like drapery around him, giving to his attitude a certain dignity that the agent had never noticed before. He was somewhat startled, indeed, at the manner of his principal, and not yet clear in his mind about the sanity of that person—nevertheless, he saw that it was necessary for him to speak, and therefore ventured to utter the monosyllable—"child ?"

"Ay, Ferret," said Mordecai Kolephat. "Tell me ! how long have you acted as my agent ?"

"Seven years, next May," replied the collector.

"Three years before that, Ferret, an infant, the last of my children, was kidnapped from her nurse, in the streets

of this city. All search, all offer of reward, failed to discover her fate, until yesterday I learned that she is living, somewhere, in this great town, and that she is connected in some manner with organ-grinders! These are all the clues that I could obtain from the dying woman, who confessed to the kidnapping; and I have sent for you, Ferret, to disclose to you these facts, and to rely upon your shrewdness to follow up such traces as you may discover, in order to ascertain for me the whereabouts of my lost child. I will reward you well, if you succeed; now, can I depend upon you?"

The agent's eyes glistened at the suggestion of personal profit, and he eagerly expressed his readiness to undertake the task of searching for the lost child. But the Jew checked him.

"Listen, Ferret," said the old man. "I have mourned for ten long years over the unknown fate of my daughter, and gladly would I receive her to my house and heart, if she be yet unsullied by the associations in which she has probably been reared. But, if she be like the vile children of the street, Ferret," ——

"Ah—ye-es!" hesitated the agent, perceiving that his principal was strongly affected by some sudden thought.

"Have I not heard—is it not true, Ferret," demanded the Hebrew, in a voice quivering with emotion—"that—that children of tender years—of scarce ten years, I mean —are adepts in vice and wicked craft?"

"Orful!" was Peleg's epigrammatic response. "Reg'-lar young catamarans!"

"That profanity and lewdness are customary to them—

that precocious knowledge renders them old in defilement ere they are yet past the days of childhood! Is this true, Ferret? Answer me! Is it not true of the young girls, as of the boys?"

"The g'rls is wuss, if anything—that's a fact, Mr. Kolephat. They picks up all sorts o' wickedness, so the p'lice says. House o' Refuge, and 'Sylum's the place for sich young 'uns."

"It is all true, then, Ferret?"

"Sure thing!" replied Peleg.

"Oh! Father Abraham! this is the last blow!" murmured the Hebrew, covering his face with his hands, and sinking back into his chair. "My child! the child of mine age! for this fate thou hast been reserved—to be a child of the street!" He bent his head upon his knees, and rocked to and fro, violently agitated. Peleg Ferret looked on, only half able to comprehend his employer's emotions.

During forty years, Mordecai Kolephat had dwelt in the great city, toiling, day by day, to amass hoards of wealth. Daily, during all that period, in his walks through the populous thoroughfares to the mart of business—in his saunterings at early morn, or upon holidays, through streets containing his increasing property—the broker had encountered, in ones and twos, and in dozens and scores, the multitudes of neglected creatures whom he had known, or cared to know, only as "children of the street." They had jostled him at the curb-stones, they had stretched out their fingers to him as he crossed the gutters, they had begged of him at the open gate; he had

seen them, in squalor and wretchedness, congregated around tenant-houses, beheld them in the hands of policemen, who were bearing them to trial or prison for petty thefts, read of them as dying very fast, in seasons of distemper, and heard reports about their numbers and condition, submitted before charitable societies or public committees. During all the forty years, Mordecai Kolephat had looked upon those forlorn and outcast street children as pests to society, in a general way, and he had, therefore, paid his taxes as a citizen should, with reference to the support of those great utilitarian features of a city —the prisons and houses of correction, built for the relief of society, in taking safe charge of its "dangerous classes."

But here, suddenly, and with fearful tangibility, a "child of the street" was laid, foundling-like, at the threshold of the citizen's door, and upon its breast was written: "Mordecai Kolephat is the father!" Here, in its rags, its filthiness, its viciousness, a miserable street-child lifted up its little hands, at the crossing, and said, with terrible earnestness: "Blood of my blood—flesh of my flesh!—take me from the gutter where I lie, and cover my nakedness with the mantle of your fatherly love!" No wonder, indeed, that the millionaire groaned in the depth of his heart, and trembled, as if smit with ague, while he murmured unto himself—

"A child of the street!—mine own little one—a child of the street!"

Peleg Ferret watched his employer, until the latter's agitation had somewhat subsided, and he regained suffi-

cient calmness to renew the conversation. But when the agent looked again upon Kolephat's features, he could not but notice that a serious alteration had taken place in them. The eyes, usually so glittering and scrutinizing, appeared now vacant and glassy; the severe lips were relaxed; and there seemed to be new wrinkles gathering upon the forehead. Peleg Ferret said to himself, as he left the library, and walked to the house-door, twirling his hat—

"The old man's breaking down!—that's so!"

For some moments after the rent-collector had departed, Mordecai remained seated in his arm-chair, one elbow resting on the desk near by, and supporting his head, which drooped heavily downward. A dismal retrospect of thought was passing through the rich man's mind: visions of youth-times, bright and fleeting, succeeded by shadowy confusion, and chased into oblivion by phantom-scenes of dark aspect and threatening import. The struggle for wealth, its attainment, and the blight which turned its fruit to ashes, its honey-stores to gall-like bitterness—all these, the product of a world-serving existence, a self-cheating pursuit of unreal good, were now passing over the cloudy disc of his memory, even as shapes of fearful things were invoked of old, to flit across the sight of one who sought unhallowed revelations. In this state of dreamy suffering, the Hebrew continued for some time after Peleg Ferret had left him; but at length, appearing to recover himself with a strong effort, he passed his hands hurriedly over his forehead, sighed deeply, and, rising to his feet, moved feebly from the library, the door of

which he closed behind him. As he disappeared, another door, communicating with one of the parlors of the house, was slowly opened, and Rebecca, the Heiress, stepped cautiously into the room. Her face was pale as marble, her eyes wandering in their expression. She had overheard the conversation. She had learned that there was a daughter of Mordecai Kolephat to come between herself and fortune—perchance between herself and—Richmond.

Chapter XX.

A Street Battle.

THE funeral was over, and Widow Marvin slept in her last bed, in the plain cemetery which was the burial-place of the humble congregation to which she had been attached in life. Margaret Winston, clasping the orphan Emily's hand, as they stood in the church-yard together, had listened, with her, to that sound so dismal to a mourner's ear, the grating fall of gravel on the coffin's lid, when the sexton cast his first clod into the grave, and the solemn words, "ashes to ashes and dust to dust," trembled upon the preacher's lips. Good Mrs. Dumsey, also, with her darling Tommy, and his eldest sister, formed part of the funeral group; and the worthy day-nurse mingled her tears in earnest sympathy with her young friend. And when, returning together in the single carriage which served for the funeral cortege, Emily leaned her head upon Margaret's bosom, Mrs. Dumsey spoke kind words, in discreet consolation, and hushed Tommy's noisy exclamations, as he remarked, with great delight, the objects which they passed; showing herself, albeit unversed in social refinement, at least the possessor of that homely grace—the art of doing good.

It was evening when they arrived at Emily's now lonesome home in Foley's Barracks; and it was on crossing its threshold that the most bitter realization of her bereavement smote the young girl's heart. Mrs. Dumsey, with her children, had bidden good-night, and the two friends sat, with arms entwined together, upon the bed whence all that was earthly of the widow had so lately been removed.

"What a long, weary day it has been to me!" murmured Emily. "Oh, Margaret! my heart feels dead in my bosom!"

"It will revive dear! you will feel better to-morrow! Please God, Emily, there are many happy days in store for you!"

A sigh, which the seamstress heaved, as she uttered these words, almost belied their hopefulness; but she kissed Emily's forehead, drawing her fondly to her breast.

"You must go home with me to-night, Emily. It is too lonely here for you, and I cannot bear to leave you. I will make up a bed for the children, and you shall sleep in my arms, sister! God will watch over us both."

Emily returned convulsively the embrace which Margaret gave her, and stifling the sobs that were breaking out afresh, endeavored to summon calmness to her reflections. Then, acceding gratefully to the proposition which the seamstress had made, she took the latter's arm, and, locking the door, they left in company the room that seemed no longer to be *home* to Emily's sorrowing spirit.

Twilight was at hand when the two girls emerged from the gloomy precincts of Foley's Barracks, and turned the

corner of a narrow street conducting to Kolephat's College, that was but a few squares distant. The clear skies and balmy air, which had made the Sunday so lovely, had at this time given place to clouds and a raw east wind, and a drizzling rain was just commencing to descend. Emily, weak and trembling, clung heavily to her companion's arm, as they picked their way over the muddy pavement.

It was no unusual sight—two humble females, walking through uncomfortable mist, and along the narrow street, at nightfall, in this poor quarter of the town ; such realities as orphanage and sorrow—such truths as poverty and loneliness—were, indeed, but habitudes of those dim purlieus of which the tenant-house was the central feature. But of such unselfish pity as animated Margaret's brow, and of such tender confidence as soothed the heart of Emily, there might, alas ! be found but few examples in this squalid neighborhood. Yet, indeed, over these wretched hovels, as over the dwellings of luxury, in other localities, He watched, whose power is limitless, and whose unsleeping vision "seeth the fall of a sparrow," and "heareth the young ravens when they cry."

The rain increased as the friends hurried on, in silence, towards their destination, drawing more closely their shawls about them, as the air blew sharply from the piers. Few persons were in the streets, for the night threatened to be a very stormy one ; but, as the girls crossed a pent-up square, whence branched off many alleys filled with dingy huts, inhabited by beings far poorer than themselves, and sentinelled by low drinking-shops, they could

hear at intervals the voices of men and women, loud in drunken hilarity, or violent in quarrelsome altercation. Margaret shuddered; for she had heard that some of these horrible by-ways were the abiding-places of thieves, and, perhaps, criminals of a darker character.

But in a neighborhood such as this, poverty is the wayfarer's protection. The wretches who skulked from the face of day in these miserable dens warred mainly against the possessors of the world's goods—waging unequal strife, from day to day, and from year to year, until their worthless lives became the forfeit of their outcast hatred of society. Perhaps, on this account, the sewing-girls were in less danger of insult in those dark streets than they might have been in quarters lined with costly mansions; nevertheless, it was not without trepidation that they pursued their way, clinging to one another, as they hastened past each dark-mouthed alley; and it was with increased terror that, in turning a corner, they encountered the staggering figure of an intoxicated man, who stretched out his hand suddenly, as if to grasp the arm of Emily. Margaret stopped, and drew her companion back, checking a cry which rose to her lips, and endeavoring to make room quietly for the drunkard, who, indeed, seemed incapable of any violence, being hardly able to support his reeling frame.

There was just light enough left to enable the seamstress to observe that the inebriate was clad in ragged garb, and that he had evidently fallen repeatedly to the ground, for his face and body were covered with the street mud. A feeling of pity mingled with the disgust

which his appearance excited, and, as she drew back, to let him pass, she sighed to think that the wretch would soon fall helpless in the gutter, or, worse still, find his devious way to some desolate hovel, there, perhaps, to inflict his evil presence on some suffering wife and mother.

At this moment, and while the man staggered past them, a confused rattle of wheels, and sudden jargon of shouting voices, sounded in the contiguous street, and at the same instant the bell of the City Hall struck the alarm for fire. The drunkard seemed to grow bewildered, and swayed violently to the right, stumbling heavily over the broken curb-stone, and pitching at his length out into the narrow street. Margaret uttered a shriek, which was lost in the din that immediately succeeded ; for a crowd of yelling men and boys, clinging to the rope of a fire-engine, came ploughing, with a wide sweep, around the corner, and then the machine itself, glittering in brass, on which a score of torchlights were reflected, followed in noisy clangor, and with fearful velocity. The blare of horns, the wild turmoil of rushing men, and noisy clash of bells, nearly paralyzed Emily, and it was almost by main strength that Margaret drew her quickly backward to the porch of a dwelling-house, till the reckless multitude had passed. There, crouching down, with the orphan's trembling form in her arms, the seamstress beheld a spectacle which filled her with horror. The wheels of the engine, whirled onward by a hundred strong hands, had passed the spot where she had seen the drunkard fall, and the fierce tramp of hundreds of feet had swept over the prostrate wretch. Margaret could not

distinguish aught in the darkness, but she felt that a human form lay mangled and bleeding, perhaps dead, upon the stones.

No other being heeded, and perchance, few of that drove of men had seen the miserable one whose helpless body they had stumbled over in their wild progress. None turned back to succor; for in another moment one of those fearful scenes was transpiring, too often witnessed in the city streets, where rival companies of firemen, encountering suddenly, appear at once inspired with mortal hatred, and engage in conflict almost instantaneously. Another engine, dragged around a neighboring corner, was dashed violently against the first, and the motley press immediately commenced a horrible *mêlée*.

The concussion of the two engines, entangling each other's ropes, seemed to be the occasion of transforming the opposing bands from human beings into demons. Shouts of defiance, oaths, and maledictions resounded through the confused mass, and blows were interchanged spontaneously. Everything that could be converted into a weapon was seized upon and wielded as such. The heavy brazen trumpets and engine-wrenches were seized and brandished aloft, paving-stones were torn from their bed, and clumps of rotten ice fell in showers upon the combatants, while knives gleamed and pistols were discharged in the very midst of the infuriated crowd.

A burly youth, in a red shirt, appeared to bear the brunt of the fight, a rain of blows falling incessantly upon his head, while he fought with arms and legs, delivering blows and kicks with an alacrity and exacti-

tude that proved him no stranger to such contests. Behind him was a lank and thin-faced lad, garbed also in fireman's shirt and cap, who flourished a trumpet wildly, dealing up and down blows with the rapidity of a hammer. It was the youngster introduced, in a previous chapter, to the reader's notice, as the undertaker's apprentice.

The belligerents on either side appeared to be animated with intense vindictiveness, clutching at one another, and exchanging savage blows, while a chorus of fierce exclamations rose above the clatter of bells, rung ceaselessly, as if to stimulate the wrath of those who fought. Amidst all, the torches danced to and fro, flashing upon the strange and frightful scene. The ropes of the two engines became entangled still more, in the evolutions of the combat, and as they marked the centre of the field, the forces on either side were alternately driven to and from them, as the fortune of the battle seemed by turns to vary. At length the weaker or less courageous party yielded ground and fled, leaving their engine overturned upon the pavement, and a yell, like the whoop of Indians, testified the triumph of their opponents.

For a moment after this there was a cessation of the unearthly clamor, and then a fresh excitement agitated the swaying crowd. Lights suddenly appeared in a house upon one side of the narrow street, and a door seemed to be violently forced in by a rush of those nearest to it. In a moment afterwards, the interlocked engines were left almost unguarded in the street, while the late combatants, thronged over the curb-stone, and, uttering hideous

cries, dashed into a beer-house which they had broken open.

During the progress of this disgraceful, though, alas! too common *mêlée*, Emily, more dead than alive, had been held closely in the arms of Margaret, who crouched in the shadow of the area where she had sought shelter, and there tremblingly awaited the result, dreading each moment that some rush of the infuriated young men would precipitate them upon her retreat, yet daring not to seek safety in flight, because on either side the street presented a scene of disorder. The seamstress had heard, in times past, of encounters between fire-companies, but, in her simplicity, had deemed that they were but passing contests in the street, speedily checked by interference of policemen. Yet here, at the close of a Sabbath day, and within a few short squares of crowded thoroughfares, a fierce and protracted riot went on before her eyes, while not a guardian of the city's peace appeared, to stay its fury. The police—loitering in the purlieus of taverns, with watchful eyes for petty rogues and homeless wanderers—the police, conniving with criminals and sharing their unlawful gains—the police, entertaining stool pigeons and serviceable villains whom outraged justice should banish from society—the police, winking at open violations of law by the keepers of gaming-houses, by lottery dealers, by professional thieves and marketable bravos—the police, aiding to exalt unscrupulous and dishonest men to place and power, suborning corruption in the ballot-box, and supporting fraud in the court-room—where were they when drunken riot endangered the peace of a civilized

city, and profaned the holy quiet of a Christian Sabbath? Where were they when, hurled down and trampled over by brutal ruffians, a human being—miserable outcast, yet still a human being—lay mangled, bleeding, and unnoticed on the pavement?

It is not improbable that some good reader—dweller, perhaps, amid the calm of rural society—may feel inclined to give but little credence to a narrative of scenes like that I have but now depicted, regarding its details as an author's customary license; but it must, unhappily, be declared that fiction cannot claim a place in such relation. Street-combats between rival fire-bands, quite as bold and bloody, quite as secure from interruption by police, are far too common in our metropolis to challenge wondering remark. Gangs of ruffian youths, under various slang designations, hailing from different wards and precincts of the city, identify themselves more or less with the Fire-Department, and cast a stigma on that noble arm of municipal service which its worthy members deplore as cruel and unmerited. The odium should not lie, indeed, at the doors of those whose lives are perilled in defence of property and life; but until they free their gallant ranks from the ruffians who disgrace them, the violence and disorder which a few create must too often involve in reprobation the many who condemn the evils. It is from hordes of desperate youths, leagued in secret, for wicked purposes, that brutal members of our police, turbulent portions of the fire organization, hired bullies at the polls, and combinations of river-thieves, foot-pads, and burglars, are recruited, day by day and year by year, until the

great city swarms with unknown banditti—threatening to be far more dangerous in the future than the swell-mob of London, the lazzaroni of Naples, the leperos of Mexico, or that restless underswell of revolution, the lower strata of Parisian social life.

And whence come, individually, all these ignorant, debased, besotted, or malignant youths and boys that form the classes to which I have alluded? and whence arise their young sisters of the streets, flitting through their short night of wretchedness and shame, and dropping incessantly, like the brothers, into prisons, hospitals, and graves? Whence, O Human Heart! come these wretched ones—crossing our daily path, like dusky shades or noxious airs, and vanishing away into a gloomy Beyond, whence-from come unto our ears wailing and shrieks as of lost souls? Where, but from Foley's Barracks?—where, but from Kolephat College?—where, but from all the abodes of desolation, and squalor, and misery, and vice, wherein nature is warped into crookedness, and humanity is brutalized—wherein infants become adepts in vice, and the virus of evil example jaundices the moral sense, even as transmittal of corruption abases the bodily blood. Go down to the tenant-house, political economist! and learn how civilization can breed desert scorpions! go thither, physician! and behold how society can gangrene unseen; descend, Samaritan! with wine and oil, to bind up the wounds of God's image, passed by too long by Priest and Levite.

Margaret the seamstress—yea, and Emily the orphan—were aware of truths that political philosophy has but of

late years begun to consider. They knew that many little ones, of two, and four, and six years, whom they habitually encountered in the passage-ways of the houses wherein they dwelt—whom, likewise, they marked in childish play on the street walks, and in lanes and alleys—were growing up under influences that would surely fashion them into the ruffianly youths whom they saw desecrating the Sabbath day by drunken rioting. Must the wise legislators and philosophers of the world ever remain ignorant of simple truths with which the humble are so familiar? Let them go down to the tenant-house, and con lessons of life.

With beating hearts and timid steps, the two girls at length stole away from their shelter, while the revellers crowded around the beer-house door. Cowering in the house-shadows, and retracing their steps deviously amid the thick mist, they at length left the sounds of riot behind—left, too, as they recollected, with a shudder, the form of a poor outcast man, lying on the stones of the street, perhaps dying, perhaps dead!

Chapter XXI.

Sabbath Night at Mr. Granby's.

HURRYING away from the scene of riot, Margaret and Emily paused not till they reached a quiet and secluded street, lined with plain but substantial mansions, at the corner of which stood an unpretending house ; its door painted of a bright green, gained by two marble steps, and displaying upon the centre a lion-headed knocker, thereby differing from its neighbors, which boasted the more modern appendage of bell-knobs. Here the seamstress stopped, and said to her companion—

"I left Harry with the kind old gentleman, Mr. Granby, who thought it would be too lonesome for the children to remain in our room. Come in with me, dear ! we will stay but a moment, and then hurry home."

Then, lightly ascending the steps, Margaret lifted the knocker, and its alarm was speedily answered by the appearance of Samson at the opening door. The old negro smiled pleasantly, and welcomed them in.

"Berry great times, Missy !" cried the honest fellow. "Dat 'ittle Fanny 'most as good skule-missy as you is yourself, Missy. Jes' come in, please, Missy."

Saying this, Samson, closing the door softly, stepped

back in the hall, that was cheerfully lighted by a pendant lamp, and then marshalled the two girls, in his friendly way, towards the quiet back room, which served Mr Granby for his library, and constituted, at the same time, a cosy sitting-room for his little family. Pausing a moment, on reaching its threshold, the black placed his finger upon his lip, as if to invoke silence, and Margaret recognized, next moment, the low voice of Fanny the orphan engaged in repeating something which sounded quite familiar to her ears.

"Knows it all by heart, Missy, I do tink," said Samson, with a look of intelligence; and the seamstress, listening intently, became aware that the child was rehearsing, almost in the language which she had herself used, that little story concerning the babe Moses, that had formed the subject of their morning's lesson in her own room at the tenant-house. Then opening the library door, Samson ushered the visitors into a circle, whose homelike peace was in lovely contrast to the wild and wicked scene that had so lately passed before their eyes, in the gloomy precincts through which they had wandered.

Mr. Granby leaned back in his arm-chair, the open Bible on the stand before him, and opposite, upon the lounge, sat Mrs. George. Bob the Weasel, sitting on a low stool, was holding little Harry closely, with one hand clasped about his neck, and playing with his brown locks, and at the old man's knee stood Fanny, her face upraised with an expression of melancholy sweetness, while, in a low and distinct tone, she recited the touching narrative,

to which Mrs. George, with parted lips, seemed the most attentive listener. At a sign from Mr. Granby, Margaret paused, with her friend, just after crossing the door-sill, in order to remain noiselessly listening a moment; but the child had heard the opening of the door, her eye wandered, and her voice faltered in its tones, and then ceased.

"Do not be frightened, dear child!" was the impulsive exclamation that rose at once to Margaret's lips, as she moved forward to take the offered hand of Mr. Granby, and at the same time stooped, to imprint a kiss upon the little orphan's cheek. Fanny, perturbed and bashful, shrank back to the side of Rob, and then Harry caught her suddenly, and threw his arms about her neck, while Mrs. George, rising with much dignity, hastily covered her eyes with her handkerchief to hide the tell-tale glister that betrayed her woman's heart. The seamstress modestly introduced her friend Emily to Mr. Granby, who, in turn, presented the two young girls to Mrs. George.

"This is my new school-mistress," said Mr. Granby, shaking Margaret's hand warmly. "You can judge of her skill in teaching, by its effect upon this little one Fanny. Miss Winston," he continued, "your pupil possesses a wonderful memory, if, as I suppose, this morning's lesson was her first. But what is this?—you are not crying, Fanny? Bless me! what is the matter?"

Fanny had sunk down, with her arms about Rob Morrison's neck, her eyes gushing with tears, while a succession of sobs broke from her lips. Harry appeared to catch the infection of grief, and began to weep likewise, and

Mrs. George, growing quite bewildered, seemed to forget her dignity, for a moment, in astonishment at this new phase of domestic experience.

"My child, you must not cry so!" continued Mr. Granby, puzzled and alarmed at Fanny's passionate sorrow. He stooped, as he spoke, and laid his hand upon the child's head; and she seemed to check her sobs, with a great effort. Emily Marvin, who had remained beside her friend, likewise bent down at this moment, and said in a soft tone—

"What is it for, dear? What were you thinking of!"

Was it the instinct of her orphanage, or the prompting of some strange, superior power, that caused the child to turn suddenly, as Emily's voice fell upon her ear—to stretch out her delicate arms, as if in supplication—while her eyes, blinded by tears, were uplifted, and her choked voice murmured—"Mother! Oh, my mother!"

Ah! good Mrs. George! do not turn away so quickly, nor hide your face with your handkerchief! Let those drops of human sympathy gush forth without restraint! See! there are tears on Mr. Granby's cheeks, and Samson's eyes are misty.

It was, indeed, a sight fitted to stir the deep of kindly sympathy; for another orphan heart had echoed the exclamations that burst so wildly from Fanny, and another bereaved one's grief had mingled with the child's sorrow. Caught abruptly to a strange but tender breast, clasped upon a heart that throbbed in anguish bitter as her own for a mother's loss, the little one mingled her plaint with that of Emily, who sobbed a moment deeply,

and then became fearfully still, just as the seamstress, extending her arms, received the relaxed form of her young friend in their sustaining clasp.

"She has fainted, sir," whispered Margaret to Mr. Granby, as the young girl's head dropped backward, disclosing the deathly pallor of her features; and at this announcement, the ruffled remnant of Mrs. George's dignity vanished instantly, and the good lady became at once the active hostess and kindly nurse; so that, under the operation of hastily-mustered restoratives, Emily Marvin soon recovered her animation, and was able to listen languidly to Margaret's simple narrative of the scenes in which they had both participated during the latter portion of her sorrowful Sabbath.

The last few days, since her mother's eyes closed upon the world, had been days of weariness and pain to the young maiden, thus left in loneliness and mourning. She had, indeed, preserved comparative calmness during the period occupied in solemn preparation for her last filial duties, and had even passed with fortitude through that sternest trial of an orphaned heart, the awful parting at the grave; but in the moment when her broken spirit caught the wail of Fanny, motherless like herself—the yearning and unrestrainable call of that poor infant upon the departed parent who might no more answer her desolate little one's cry—in this moment, the waters of bitterness broke forth from the Marah of her own pent feelings, and the realization of her woe found relief only in sudden insensibility.

Mr. Granby's sympathies were awakened freshly by the

new and interesting object presented to them, and he heard with great satisfaction of Margaret's intention to unite her domestic life with that of Emily. Mrs. George, on her part, was conscious of a new revelation regarding a class of persons concerning whom she had hitherto known very little, and, as must truly be said, trouble herself less. The worthy housekeeper was a member of that very-much-to-be-pitied circle of society known to themselves, if not to the world, as reduced gentlewomen. Her parents, lost to her at an early period of her life, had been the possessors of little fortune, but a great deal of pride, and had brought up their only child with no lack of the latter and a very great respect for possessors of the former. She had been educated as fashionably as the straitened finances of her parents could afford, and taught in infancy that as good blood ran in her veins as in any English family, dating back to King William of Hastings. Consequently, when the death of her natural protectors left the young lady with a pretty face and slim wardrobe, in the care of a matter-of-fact, match-making relative, her family pride assisted her to refuse sundry eligible offers of plain young business men, and to yield gracefully to the blandishments of a gentleman who had no business at all, as it turned out, after she had married him, and who, when they had lived several years together in a precarious and most unfashionable way, managed to leave her in middle life, very proud still, but totally unprovided for. Had she, at this crisis, been in England, the country of her parents, she might have merged her gentility in the position of a governess, at twenty pounds a year ; but in

America, where governesses are not in demand, she found a refuge, in her need, in the goodness of an old friend of her parents, Mr. Martin Granby, and became, at his request, the care-taker and manager, with due dignity, of his plain but comfortable family economy. Such was Mrs. George at the period when her quiet life was so unexpectedly broken in upon by what she at first termed the "whimsical" benevolence of her patron; and great was her own mental wonderment, it must be told, to find herself, upon this Sabbath evening, so forgetful of station as to weep at a little beggar girl's stories, and agitate her nerves most unprecedentedly in ministering to a fainting sewing-girl.

But Mrs. George, though lacking in genteel deportment that evening, did not, as it appeared, sink at all in the estimation of either Mr. Granby or his servant Samson; for it was noticeable that, during a temporary absence of the housekeeper from the library, after Emily had been recovered, a quick interchange of glances passed between master and man, and the old gentleman whispered in his sable friend's ears, that "Mrs. George was a kindhearted woman, after all," to which Samson responded by the emphatic word "berry;" and it is furthermore matter worthy of record, that when, shortly afterwards, Margaret and Emily, with Harry and Fanny, took their farewell for the evening, Mrs. George not only shook hands warmly with both the sewing-girls, but saluted their pale cheeks with a real matronly kiss, and then actually stooped and kissed the children, not forgetting Bob the Weasel, who thus, for the first time in his life, felt the touch of woman's

lips upon his poor face, and thereafter, when he was safe in bed, cried a whole hour about it, in very joy. Ah, indeed, Mrs. George! sorrowful as that Sabbath day seemed to the orphans, it was sanctified unto you, and unto them, by the divine charity, the holy human sympathy, that thrilled in a parting kiss and glittered, jewel-like, in a pitying tear.

When the sewing-girls went home through the misty streets, to Kolephat College, that night, the light of Mr. Granby's cheerful library fire shone out before and behind their footsteps, irradiating the stormy darkness; and when they knelt in prayer with the little ones, and then, folded in one another's sisterly arms, sank into the calm slumber of innocence, be sure the kindly forms of Mr. Granby and his housekeeper, and the shining friendliness of Samson's face, stole over their dreams, mingled, haply, with the glorified shapes of mothers bending down in heavenly benediction over mortal children. Thus, even the tenant-house was no more gloomy, and the memory of death became blessed unto the mourners.

Chapter XXII.

The Beer-House and its Guests.

IT was an hour after the rencontre which took place between the rival engine companies before comparative quiet returned to the dingy quarter wherein the affray had broken out; and during the interval, crowds of young men caroused in the vile porter-houses of the vicinity. The false alarm of fire and subsequent street conflict, were soon after succeeded by a truce between the belligerents, pending which much bad liquor was drank, and the captured engine restored to its proper custodians. Then, manning the ropes, with loud shouting and many discordant noises, the riotous companies diverged to their respective head-quarters, leaving the locality of the strife to subside into gloomy wretchedness. Then, one by one, the street loiterers slunk away, some to cellars, others to the garrets of neighboring tenant-houses, others again to places of rendezvous, where were met together low gamblers, thieves, and receivers of stolen goods. A few shabby wretches lingered in the corner beer-shop, after the fire-boys had departed, busy in discussing the merits of respective companies as well as the

quality of a muddy-looking beverage which the keeper of the place chose to designate as ale.

This beer-shop, a type of its class, was located at the corner of a block of shambling houses. It stood a few feet back from the broken pavement, and formed the basement of a plastered building, with a long, shelving roof, and projecting eaves, rotten with age. A sort of piazza, or stoop, separated the door from the sidewalk, and under two windows, looking upon the street, stood, at certain seasons, a high-backed bench—the lounging-place, in fine weather, of ill-looking men and coarse boys, and the depository, in winter, of ash-boxes, shattered glass-ware, and whatever other lumber might be cast at random from the upper windows. The door of entrance to the beer-shop's interior was glazed, and curtained with some material once red, but now of mottled dinginess, through which the inside light struggled in yellow streaks. On a wet night, amid cold fog and muddy gutters, this miserable beer-shop's exterior seemed unpromising enough; nevertheless, there was no hour, during day or evening, in which some visitor did not enter, or some one customer or more disburse his copper coins for strange decoctions of intoxicating fluids. Indeed, at intervals, if a passer-by might judge from sounds of revelry, the beer-shop entertained a class of roystering guests; and should such passer-by pause, and haply enter through the glazed door, he would, it is not to be doubted, encounter a mingling of mirth, ferocity, and wretchedness, that might or might not be to his taste.

At the present hour, after the last rattle and clamor of

engines and firemen had died away outside, the beer-shop, as before remarked, still detained, in Circean attraction, a portion of the crowd which had lately filled it. The wants of these customers were comprised, of course, in the area of a wooden counter, denominated the "bar," behind which were displayed on shelves a row of black bottles, sundry bundles of cheap cigars, and a few green-looking glasses—the whole presided over by a consumptive Irishman, with sandy whiskers and unsteady legs, who coughed a great deal, and constantly stooped behind the counter, to imbibe repeated swallows of some nondescript liquor, that he averred to be the "rale stuff for a cowld." His guests at the time were of doubtful social standing, if physiognomy, as well as apparel, be any index of position. In a corner of the apartment, with limbs extending loosely under the low funnel of a cylinder stove, and his head resting uneasily against the counter-front, sat on a wooden bench such a figure as Hogarth might have been glad to sketch ; a newly-imported immigrant from Ireland, whose knotted fingers clasped the handle of a tin vessel which he had drained of its contents, while a short blackened tobacco pipe, fallen from his mouth, had scattered its ashes freely over the ragged corduroys that covered his nether limbs. A green jacket, threadbare and blotched, but exhibiting a trace of former jauntiness in two or three brass jockey buttons that still hung to it, and a low-crowned hat, once beaver, that was poised crazily on the edge of the coat-collar, constituted the residue of national costume possessed by this off-shoot of an island where, unhappily, the whisky still is more cherished than the

school-house, and, as a consequence, the poor-house is more crowded than the church. Near by, and stretched at full length upon a settee, reclined a youth with face turned upward, and a noxious cigar in his mouth, from which, likewise, he directed a succession of smoke-puffs, toward the stupefied owner of the corduroys and broken pipe; sipping at intervals, the while, from a glass of smoking liquor held in one hand. A claret-hued coat, much defaced, was buttoned half-way up over a red cotton-velvet vest, under which might be detected an extremely dirty shirt, and the latter was surmounted at the neck by a tattered black kerchief, tied in a hangman's knot.

One other individual was visible, besides the bar-keeper —a man who appeared to shrink from observation in a dusky corner, or recess, formed by the outer door frame extending inward. This man's garments, tattered and threadbare, were wet, and much stained and dirty, as if his back had made frequent acquaintanceship with the gutter; his hat or head-covering was crushed, and seemed to have been stamped upon, and his shoes were thick with mud, as though the owner had been traversing through the clay of a country highway. His face, bent down, apparently to shun notice, was impressed with a sullen and desperate cast. He cowered from the gaze of the bar-keeper, and started nervously at every sound in the street without. If Mallory the Miser of Kolephat College could see this man, he would recognize him as the robber of his darling gold; for it was, in truth, Keeley, who after wandering away on the outskirts of the city, in

terror lest his theft should have been discovered, had returned, on the Sabbath night, to his old haunts in the city, and was now drowning fear and reflection in draughts of stupefying poison. He had already drank deeply, as it seemed by his demeanor ; nevertheless, the pale Irishman at the bar responded, with a commendatory grin, to his order, given in husky tones, for "more brandy," proceeding, at the same time, to prepare a mixture similar in hue and odor to the steaming potation in which the youth in crimson waistcoat was indulging. At this moment, the door was abruptly opened, and two young men—the brace of champions who had distinguished themselves during the late fight—entered swaggeringly, and advanced towards the counter. They still wore their red shirts ; but the bull-necked youth had donned likewise a blue frock coat, and exchanged his fireman's cap for a black hat, while his comrade, the undertaker's apprentice, had enveloped his loose limbs in a black coat capacious enough to have swathed two youths of the same dimensions, and crowned his cadaverous visage with a cloth cap of Teutonic cut and scantiness. The new-comers simultaneously addressed the occupant of the settee, soliciting him to join them in "another glass," which invitation the young gentleman, swallowing the liquor in his tumbler, signified his entire readiness to accept.

"Brandy?" suggested the consumptive bar-keeper ; "brandy," replied the bull-necked fire-boy; and "brandy," echoed the undertaker's assistant and the crimson-vested youth upon the settee. It is a single word, pronounced hourly in ten thousand places of the great metropolis ;

drawled, at times, from the lips of undecided neophytes, hurriedly ejaculated by eager sots, lisped by delicate young gentlemen, as they wave their gloved fingers to the poison-mixer; imperatively uttered by desperate men, anxious to seek oblivion from thought in transient brutishness; it is a little word, easily breathed; but, oh! what a train of consequences follows its repetition! what blasted hopes, withered happiness, desolated homes, ruined lives, and dread, untimely deaths, glide on funereally behind the wizard word that opens, to cheat the soul, the wretched phantasma of a drunkard's enjoyments.

"Our boys is got somethin' to brag on, now," remarked the undertaker's lad.

"Yes," responded the crimson-vested youth, rising from his reclining position. "You'd better b'lieve they's some, now."

"We don't get frightened at any plug-muss, you better lay your dear life *we* don't," asseverated the bull-necked youth, tossing off his hot liquor with the air of a connoisseur, and glancing superciliously about him, as if desirous of having his remarks contradicted. The consumptive bar-keeper, to whose accustomed ears the vernacular of his customers was quite intelligible, smiled ghastly approval of the last speaker's opinion, and then, spreading his hands out upon the counter, remained in silent expectation of payment for his beverages.

"Who treats?" asked he of the red waistcoat, resuming his cigar, and puffing rapidly.

"Me!" answered the undertaker's apprentice, assuming a dignified air, as he exhibited a silk purse, and drew from

it a half-dozen bank-bills, the sight of which caused a manifestation of surprise by his companions.

"In funds, Jim!" exclaimed the bull-necked youth; to which James replied, dogmatically, "Nothin' shorter;" whereupon the pale Irishman consulted a greasy "Counterfeit Detector," which he took from beneath the counter, and, having satisfied himself that the note tendered was a good one, rummaged out the necessary silver change from his till, and handed it to his customer. The three young men then called for cigars, and after consulting in regard to their future nocturnal explorations, took one another's arms, and sallied upon the street, leaving the wretched immigrant in corduroys stupidly intoxicated on his bench, while the bar-keeper, mindful of his interests, was preparing to respond to another demand from Keeley, for "more brandy."

It is an hourly subject for description—the common nightly routine of a corner beer-house; but it is because it is so hourly and common that I have chosen to describe it. It is because, in every street of this great city, in almost every block of its more squalid quarters, are one, two, and perchance many more, of these pitfalls and quicksands of society, wherein thoughtless youth, and desperate manhood, and repining age, sink incessantly, and are lost, body and soul. Lying in wait for the unwary, they lure continual victims; born of the ignorance and appetite of the poor, they generate poverty in their turn, and with it shame, misery, disease, and death. Therefore, trite as may be the subject, and common the scene, there lies beneath my mention of a corner grocery

much that may well be reflected upon by the moralist, much that may rightly alarm the conscience of a Christian man.

"More brandy," muttered the wretched Keeley, as he had growled thrice, at least, before; and the sickly bar-keeper, shuffling from the counter, with ghastly visage and spectral figure, presented again the steaming poison that was to steep the drunkard's brain in deeper imbecility. Meantime, the Irishman in corduroys had roused himself in part from his drowsiness, and was staring about him with a stupid look. The bar-keeper advanced towards him, and remarked, gruffly, "It's time ye was off, my good man."

"An' where'll I be off, honey?" asked the man. "Sorra the rap I've got—more-be-token that I spint my last pinny with ye's, honey."

"Ye'll not lie here, anyhow," returned the bar-keeper. "So put your best foot before ye."

The half-stupefied immigrant, thus adjured, staggered to his feet, and began to move towards the door; but he paused before reaching the threshold.

"Ned Connery," he said, looking askance at the owner of the beer-shop, "ye'll be afther turnin' me out, bekase I've no money, though many's the bit an' sup *your* father got of *my* father, in the ould counthry. But, niver mind, Ned! it's the likes o' ye that has the heart to turn the back upon a poor man."

"Off with ye, an' no more palaver, now," rejoined the bar-keeper; and, opening the door quickly, he thrust his tottering countryman out into the porch. The old man

struggled a moment, half resistingly, but the door was slammed rudely against him, crushing his fingers as they clung with drunken tenacity to the jambs. He uttered a cry of pain, and staggered into the deserted street.

The rain was falling in small close drops, chill as sleet, and over the broken pavement and gutters pools of muddy water were beginning to collect. The street was pitchy dark, save only a spot nearly half a square distant, where stood a corner lamp-post, the dim light from which scarcely penetrated a dozen yards through the surrounding murk. Towards this dull beacon, however, the drunken immigrant reeled, with uncertain steps, until he had nearly crossed the street, when his progress was suddenly checked by some prostrate object, over which he stumbled, and fell headlong at the pavement edge.

"Blissed Mary! what's that?" ejaculated the old man, as he rolled heavily over, and, discovering himself to be unhurt, scrambled slowly up, until seated upon the curb-stone. Then fortifying himself by a rapid crossing of his hands over head and breast, he ventured to creep back a few paces, stretching out his hand in the darkness, till he encountered what appeared to be a human body lying in the hollow of the gutter.

"Wirasthru!" cried the Irishman, "it's a dead corpse, I'm thinkin';" and appalled at the thought, he shrank back; but at the moment, a deep groan from the object arrested his movements.

"It's a murthered Christian, anyhow, for I hear him spake!" cried the immigrant. "I'll go back at onct to Ned Connery, the white-livered spalpeen, an'" ——

But a footstep, at this moment, sounded on the sidewalk near him, and the Irishman caught sight of a man's figure just visible in the darkness. In an instant, he gained the pedestrian's side, and plucked him by the arm.

"'Ud ye be after goin' by, and a feller-crachure murthered and kilt, Misther?" he demanded, abruptly, addressing the astonished passer, who responded, nervously—

"What can I do for you?"

"Sorra a bit for me, good man; but if ye'd look in the gutther, beyant, there's a poor body groanin', like one kilt intirely. It's here he is, Misther."

Saying this, the immigrant stooped, and directed the other's extended hand to the body before them, resting in a puddle of water, and drenched by the falling rain.

"He is not dead, it is evident," said the stranger; "but he is wounded, I fear, and should be removed at once, that his condition may be seen. My dwelling is but a few rods distant, and perhaps we shall be able to lift him thither."

These words were uttered very quietly, as if the speaker had been prepared for the rencontre, and made dispositions to meet it; at least, so it appeared to the immigrant, whose Milesian excitement was in strange contrast to his new companion's unperturbed demeanor. Nevertheless, his sturdy, though not youthful arms were put in immediate requisition in raising the suffering man, who seemed totally helpless, only groaning at intervals, as if in internal pain. Supporting him on either side, the two then managed to draw their burden along the sidewalk, though the immigrant's legs were not, indeed, of the steadiest,

the result of recent potations, or, perhaps, of scanty nourishment otherwise. Arrived beneath the street lamp, they saw that the wounded man's face was covered with blood, and that one arm hung loosely, as if broken. The Irishman, likewise, glanced furtively at the individual whom he had called to assist him, and saw that he was a short and rather oldish person, with a mild and thoughtful face, marked, at this moment, with an expression of great pity.

"Here is my poor dwelling-place," said this man, indicating by a nod of his head the entrance of a narrow alley opposite the lamp post.

"It's not the richest houses the best people lives in," returned the immigrant. "Aisy, now, till I get a good hoult."

So saying, he shifted his arm, and assisted to sustain their load, till a small ten-foot house, or rather shed, was reached, at the window of which the short man knocked, his summons being answered immediately by the opening of a door, and the appearance of a female child on the threshold, holding a light, which she shaded from the rain with her small hand. She uttered an exclamation of alarm at the unexpected sight that met her eyes; but a word from the person who had knocked appeared to quiet her at once, and she drew back, admitting the two bearers into the room. The wounded man was deposited upon an old sofa, which stood between the windows, and the resident of the house then said to the child—

"Is your uncle asleep, my child?"

"No, father—he's writing in his room."

"This is a poor man who is hurt, I fear, very badly, Ally ; and your uncle had better see him."

"Yes, father—I'll call uncle."

"Stop a bit," said the man, lowering his tone, and looking anxiously about him. "Your mother has not" ——

"No, father !—haven't you seen her ?"

The man groaned deeply, and shook his head.

"But go, Ally," he said, "call your uncle."

The girl disappeared through a door which opened into a back room, and presently her low voice was heard speaking to some one, who replied querulously, after which a shuffling was heard, and the door re-opening discovered the child returning, and leading by the hand a very curious figure. It was a man who might be forty, fifty, or seventy years of age, according to an observer's skill in computing the marks upon a countenance ruddy with color, and yet made old-looking by masses of silver hair, which hung on either side of the shining cheeks. Blue eyes, small but clear and bright, and white teeth, seemed, with his fine complexion, to give a claim to youth ; but, on the other hand, his shoulders were stooped, his neck bent, and his limbs tottered, as he advanced, like those of an old man. He fixed his glance on the immigrant, immediately, and said, in a childish tone of voice—

"What do you want, my good man?—what has my brother brought you here for ?"

"Sure, an' it's aisy to find *that* out, Misther, if ye's got eyes," returned the Irishman, pointing to the wounded form on the sofa.

"Oh ! there's another—is there ?" cried the uncle,

seemingly much perplexed. "Oh, yes!—Alice said so! I'm very forgetful!" He pressed his forehead with his hand.

"Yes, Walter—'tis a poor fellow we found in the street, just opposite, and I thought you could tell how he was hurt, at once."

"That was right, brother," said the other, stooping at once to the sofa, and passing his hand, in a professional manner over the man, who groaned, but still remained with eyes closed, and apparently powerless to move or speak. The girl and her father, with the immigrant, looked on in silence, till the uncle had concluded his examination, and pronounced the man's arm to be broken in several places, while bruises and contusions were discoverable on his other limbs, head, and body.

"I should say he has been knocked down, and run over by a carriage, and perhaps kicked by horses," said the examiner, with a sagacious look.

"Maybe it was the fire-boys that bate him," suggested the Irishman.

"If he is in a condition to be moved to the hospital, now, Walter, I might call a policeman?" said the other man; at which remark, Walter shook his head, and observed—

"The patient had better remain undisturbed. I am sufficient for his case, and I can, perhaps, to alleviate humanity, spare one night from more laborious duties, designed likewise, brother Hubert, to benefit our common kind."

These words, spoken with great seriousness and dignity,

were heard with much deference by the brother and niece, while the immigrant looked somewhat perplexed, as though he could not entirely fathom their meaning. But Walter's next remark was much more intelligible.

"I shall set this fellow-creature's broken limb," said he; "and you, Hubert, may get ready some splints and bandages, as I shall direct, while Alice will hold the light. As for this other man, I don't know as he will be wanted at all—so he may go, if he pleases."

The Irishman held down his head, much abashed at the speaker's deliberate dignity. He glanced from one to the other of the two brothers, and then at the door.

"Is it go, ye mane?" he asked hesitatingly.

"Certainly, my good man; I shall not require your assistance. You may, if you please, call at the hospital, and say the patient is in good hands."

"And where might *that* place be?" ventured the immigrant; "maybe they'd give a fellow-crachure a night's lodgin' for 'humanity,' as ye was talkin' about."

"Have you nowhere to lodge?" asked the brother who had been addressed as Hubert.

"Throth, I've no better lodgin' than the bed where this same poor chap was lyin' when we tuk him up," answered the immigrant, as he nodded his head towards the wounded man, who had now opened his eyes, under the effects of some powerful stimulant contained in a phial which Alice had handed to her uncle.

"If that be the case," said Hubert, in the calm tone that appeared so remarkable to the Celt, "you had better remain here. We will strive to accommodate you."

"Accommodate!" echoed the immigrant, "is it that you'd be doin'? Small accommodation *I* want, but the flure, behind the stove; or, if I might be bould, to sit up and be company for ye's, till the poor chap is made asier. I'm a poor stranger in a strange land; but I'm not a thafe nor a beggar-man."

"Sit down, then, my friend, by the stove," said the host; and then proceeded to renew the fire, that had become low; after which, while his brother busied himself in bathing his patient's hurts, he procured cloth for bandages and smoothed out some pine fragments into splints wherewith to support the fractured limb. The Irishman watched the movements of his new acquaintances with great apparent interest, occasionally hazarding a shrewd observation; and the child Alice stood patiently by the sofa, holding the lamp as her uncle directed.

At length, the operations were finished, the arm swathed and set, and the sufferer, under the influence of an anodyne, soothed into a profound sleep, his head supported by a pillow that Alice brought from an interior room, and his breast and shoulders, from which the mud-covered vesture had been removed, covered with a light quilt. These dispositions made, Walter, whose surgical skill seemed to afford him great self-satisfaction, as well as to impress his brother and niece with renewed reverence, rubbed his hands together, as he surveyed the sleeping man, and exclaimed—

"There, brother! I have not forgotten the art of healing, though so long out of practice. Astley Cooper could

not have done it more cleverly, Hubert. Eh ! what does our Celtic friend think ?"

"Is it me ye mane ?" asked the immigrant. "Faix, docther, it 'ud be worth while for a chap to break his leg, jist to be traited so dacently."

Walter pursed up his lips, and scanned the Irishman narrowly. "You seem to be tolerably intelligent, my good fellow," he remarked, patronizingly. "I suppose you enjoyed all the advantages a hedge school could afford, at home—eh, my good man ?"

"Throth, an' I tached a hedge-school mesilf," replied the Irishman. "Latin, Graak, and the mathematics, more-be-token. But what good is larnin' in a counthry like this ?"

The Irishman's retort seemed to hit the humor of the singular individual to whom it was addressed ; for Walter laughed immoderately, and remarked to his brother that "Celtic wit was proverbial;" whereat the calm-spoken Hubert smiled, likewise, as in appreciation of the wisdom contained in the observation.

"So, you have been a hedge schoolmaster, my Celtic friend," pursued Walter. "Now, you are just the man I was seeking for ; and I will read to you, at once, a chapter of my great work upon 'Humanity and its Necessities,"—a chapter, my dear sir, that interests, in a great degree, your unfortunate Milesian countrymen, who, in their immigration to this favored land, bring also their poverty, degradation, ignorance, and general social misery. It will be very instructive to you, and I shall have your opinion on some important points."

The immigrant looked bewildered, venturing no reply, whereupon the white-haired but ruddy-visaged Walter half walked and half tottered to the door through which he had previously emerged, and opening it, disclosed a small, but neat apartment, containing a single bed, a chair and table, the latter piled with manuscript sheets. The room was lit by a tin lamp, depending over the table from a sort of frame-work, that might be elevated or depressed by means of a cord. Pen and ink lay beside a half-written-over sheet of paper, denoting that Walter, when summoned by the child, had been engaged in adding to the mass of closely-written matter that was collected on and under the table, and upon various shelves around the walls of the apartment.

Shuffling towards one of the heaps, the singular man bent his round shoulders so low, that he appeared like a hunchback, and then wheeling suddenly, held up a heavy roll of manuscript which he had taken from a lower shelf.

"Here, Mr. Schoolmaster, you see the chapters of my great work that I intend reading to you to-night. You may sit down now. Alice, bring a chair for our Milesian friend, while I proceed to read what will greatly edify, if heard with proper attention."

Alice brought a chair for the immigrant, in which that individual seated himself, without remark, and Hubert, taking another at the threshold of the small apartment, drew the little girl to his knee, kissing, as he did so, her pale cheek, and whispering something in a low tone, of which only the word "mother" was uttered above the breath, and that with a deep sigh. Walter then placed

himself at the table, and adjusted his tin lamp, so that its light fell upon the closely-written pages which he spread out before him. Coughing thrice to clear his throat, he then began to read aloud, in a very measured distinctness that failed not to impress his Hibernian hearer with a fitting sense of the dignity as well as importance of the subject.

Chapter XXIII.

Walter's Book.

"WHAT is a man?—what is a soul?—what is a state? The first is *I*—the second is *you*—the third is both of us. If I exist in solitude, and without *you*, I am barren of a SOUL, because the higher faculties of my being, which are friendship, love and sympathy, come not into use; but only the lower instincts, provident of my subsistence and security, shall be necessary to me. If *you* be with me, the divinity which is in you draws out the divinity that lies dormant in my nature, and the drawing out is education, whereby you and I know each other, as men and as souls, and become a union of vital interests, which is the proper society, or state. Thus, two men, endowed with souls, mutually educated, enlightened, and understanding one another, constitute a state—which one man cannot be, of himself, and which two apes, or other brute natures, without souls, cannot be.

"What is the object of a state? *i. e.*, of two immortal natures, mutually intelligent concerning one another? It is, of a surety, happiness, because each of the two individuals desires happiness, and the two have a community of interests. If an object attained, a work achieved,

bestow happiness upon the man, it will likewise, it is probable, insure happiness to the state, or multitude of men, one man being considered in this view as a duplicate of another man. If it be conceded, therefore, that individual morality, political liberty, physical comfort, and religious feeling, are the bases of true happiness in the man, then it shall follow that a multitude, or people, or state, must ground its happiness on the same foundation.

"But every man of the multitude—every individual of the people, or state—does not possess the four elements of happiness enumerated above ; that is, individual morality, political liberty, physical comfort and religious feeling. He may be wanting in the first, through neglected education—in the second, through bad government—in the third, through poverty—in the last, because of evil association or habitude ; *ergo*, he, as an isolated man, cannot be happy. If this be the case, then the people, or community, in which the man dwells, must likewise suffer, and the sympathy or harmony of the state be more or less injuriously affected. The balance or equilibrium of happiness is destroyed, because one of the individual immortal natures in the state is himself unhappy, for two reasons—first, because he cannot enjoy *good ;* and, second, because he does not sympathize with his neighbor's possession of good. If two men should be suddenly placed upon a desolate island together—the one having been educated in the knowledge and love of good, the other's nature neglected, so that he remained wild and savage—no true harmony could exist between the two ; because the savage, obeying his instincts, would be rude

and ferocious, plotting against and unwilling to consort with the other; while the educated man could have no sympathy with the brutal appetites and animal propensities of his fellow inhabitant of the island. In this position of affairs, the educated man would be in danger of harm or death from the wild man, or he must enslave or kill him, or he must destroy his brute instincts and malice. The educated man would resolve upon the latter course, and compass his object in one way only; *i. e.*, by winning the confidence of the wild man, becoming kind and useful to him, and by degrees making him like himself—that is to say, *educated*. He would do this, not only from the dictates of humanity prompting benevolent action, but he would do it in self-protection, bestowing his own knowledge and attributes upon the savage, in order to render the latter's disposition humane and harmless.

"We apply this principle of self-protective education to society at large, and inquire: Are. not all ignorant, destitute, brutal natures in the position of savages, as regards their relations to the community?—dangerous to the well-being of the state, destructive to its sense of security, its equilibrium, its harmony, and its happiness? What, then, is left, but for the community, society, or the state, to enslave, kill, or educate its savage constituents? It will not enslave or kill; therefore, it must instruct, refine, and elevate. The desolate island savage could not be instructed without the direct agency of a teacher; so, neither can the masses of uneducated society be properly influenced till educated society shall assume the teacher's task. Here, then, as a personal necessity, the state must

charge itself with the enforcement of proper methods of local education, as fundamental safeguards of social symmetry and security. For, 'If men are not lovers of virtue,' says the statesman, Lacroix, 'punishments will not be sufficient to keep them in their duty : they will gratify their passions whenever they think they can do it with impunity. The best way, therefore, nay, the only way, to make them obey the laws, is to give them morals ; that is, to inspire them with a love of virtue.' Good education, indeed, is that palladium in the possession of which Minerva taught that a state should be prosperous and secure. Men whose infancy was neglected, or whose youth was badly instructed, will not hesitate to violate the clearest and most positive laws ; whereas they who have received a proper education shall cheerfully and readily submit to proper regulations, finding more happiness in so doing than an immoral man will experience in the indulgence of broadest license. Well said Isocrates, the Grecian—'Those who would govern a state properly must not think of filling porticos with laws written upon tablets of stone, but must take care that citizens have the maxims of justice engraven on their hearts.'"

Walter here paused, to arrange the scattered leaves, glancing, as he did so, at his Irish listener, who sat half upright in his chair, with mouth distended, and eyes fixed upon the reader, though no very impressive marks of intelligence or sympathy were noticeable in his countenance. Hubert had left his seat, near the door, and withdrawn, with Alice, into another room, adjoining the main one, and seeming to be furnished with somewhat more

attention to appearance than the outer apartment, which latter served for eating and sitting-room. The house itself, a small wooden cottage of uncertain age, contained only four rooms, upon the street level, though a basement that was used as kitchen added to the capacity of the building. The room into which Hubert had stepped, with Alice, was carpeted, and contained a curtained bed, bureau, rocking-chair, and a few other articles of domestic comfort, and its walls were hung with a mirror and several pictures. The father sat down, with his little child, whose hands were clasped in his, and leaning his head against a table, on which he had deposited the candle, appeared to sink into sombre meditation.

"Father, will mother come home to-night?"

"I cannot tell, my child," said the man, with a deep sigh.

"Mother don't love us any more," continued the girl, looking up to her father's face.

"Alas! I fear not," cried Hubert. "Tell me, Alice, what did she say this morning, before she went out?"

"I'd rather not, dear father—you will be angry."

"I shall not be angry, my child."

"She said that uncle Walter and you were both crazy, and would be sent to the poor-house," ——

"Ah, ah!" exclaimed Hubert. "What else?"

"Oh, father! I'd rather not tell you."

"Do not fear, Alice."

"She wished you were both dead."

"Oh!" groaned the man, covering his face with his hands, to hide the tears that gushed to his eyes.

Alice climbed upon his knees, winding her arms about his neck, laying her cheek against his, and trying, with silent caressing, to soothe the pain that she feared had been inflicted by her words. The father asked no other question of his child, but he clasped her convulsively in his arms, and rocked to and fro. The candle began to flare in its socket, till presently its uncertain flickers died away; but still, in the darkness, Hubert pressed his child's form to his breast, feeling the beating of her little heart with his own, whilst, from the outer room, sounded the monotonous voice of his brother Walter, reading to his silent auditor the wandering fancies of a strange mind. Thus passed an hour away, before the father, rousing his faculties, discovered that Alice had fallen to quiet slumber in his arms. "Thank God!" he said, "her young spirit can find forgetfulness so soon!" Then, kissing her again, he lifted her slight form tenderly, and laid her upon the bed, after which, noiselessly opening the door, he passed to the sitting-room, and, glancing hastily at the still sleeping man upon the settee, quietly resumed his seat at Walter's door, without attracting attention from either reader or listener.

Walter had, as it appeared, succeeded in magnetizing the Hibernian's senses completely; for the latter, though still maintaining his erect position, with head firmly braced against the back of his chair, had evidently long since yielded to the influence of drowsiness, and was enjoying a peaceful nap, while the rounded sentences rolled measuredly from his instructor's lips. Hubert noticed this, at once, but made no remark, knowing his brother would be

grieved at the discovery of such inattention, but willing, rather, to assume himself the quality of auditor, though, truth to say, the matter was to him "an oft told tale." As he seated himself, however, the Milesian awoke, and, with great gravity, fixed his grey eyes upon Walter, in apparently earnest interest.

"What is liberty?—what is equality?—what is fraternity?" went on the voice of Walter, reading from his voluminous pages. "Liberty is justice; equality is order; fraternity is duty. There exists no liberty in wrong—no equality in misrule—no fraternity in mischief. A man hath not liberty to be ignorant, nor to be dishonest, nor to be reckless; he may not outlaw himself in life, or die by his own hand, and yet commit no sin; and if he be a true freeman, he will not desire so to do. A man may not equalize his neighbor's proportions or stature with his own, by lopping off a limb from that neighbor, or cutting an inch from his height. Neither may he circumscribe his neighbor's enjoyments, possessions, desires, by the limit of his own; for this would be disorder, and not equality—since the equality of each man with another is as to the sphere which he fills, and the relation that he bears to it. The pigmy in a cottage hath the same measure of room wherein to move as doth the giant in a palace; for the relations which they hold to limits are the measures of their equality. If the pigmy shall grow larger, he may require the palace-area, but, as a pigmy, the cot is fittingly his house. Neither may a man fraternize with repulsiveness; for brotherhood is not in the body, but in the soul, of a fellow-creature. If, therefore, I would show frater-

nity, it shall be to the hopeful, to the courageous, to the aspiring—not to the despairing, nor to the cowardly, nor to the grovelling man; since his soul is not brotherly with mine, nor the qualities thereof sympathetic with my nature. Here, then, lies *liberty*—in the freedom of a man to be generous, and truthful, and pure of heart; and *equality*—in his acting fairly his own part, in the midst of his own surroundings, and recognizing the while all other parts, in all other surroundings; and *fraternity*—in making harmony only with pure interests, beholding kindred only in loftier attributes. Liberty aspires—equality seeth and filleth properly the measure of aspiration—fraternity linketh liberty with equality as a bond of virtuous ambition between all classes of men. Do you seek for Liberty? go not to the great cities of our republic; for in their midst you will find thousands of human beings left to become thieves and to uprear their children thieves—to sink into pauperism, and make of their offspring paupers. Would you discover Equality? go not to the cities, wherein wallow men and women in ignorance, and filth, and depravity, corrupting their souls, and the souls of their little ones, day by day, and losing the equality of their humanity, in the disorder of brutish instincts. Go not thither to preach Fraternity; for the wretched ones will fancy that demons are brothers, and cling to them rather than to angels.

"Nevertheless, go there, whosoever you are that would preach liberty, equality, and fraternity! go into the abodes of wretchedness that disfigure the cities, marring their beauty with sores and leprosy. Behold the debased slaves

of intemperance, the practitioners in vice, the grovellers at Humanity's foot. Mark the forlorn wrecks of dissolute men and women, the indolent, the diseased, the enervated, the brutal—all victims, in a greater or less degree, to a moral scurvy engendered by ignorance, licentiousness, and poverty. Reflect that these degraded creatures have *liberty* to be the custodians of sinless souls in the bodies of little children—reflect that they will, sooner or later, *equalize* those sinless souls into one horrible level of precocious knowledge, one undistinguishable generality of infantile beggary, squalor, and disease. Reflect that they will make of their innocent offspring, born in filth and nursed amid malaria, a *fraternity* of tainted childhood, to grow up like themselves into corrupt maturity. Reflect that, at this moment, thousands and tens of thousands of such infant souls are narrowed and cramped by miserable sordid bodies—souls of little children imprisoned and debased by the liberty which their parents possess of ruining their divine natures—souls, bright from their Maker's hand a few years since, but now dim and lustreless—still immortal, still capable of redemption, indeed, but doomed—doomed to perdition, if not rescued from their vile surroundings. Reflect on those things, O philanthropist! and let your voice be heard as one crying in the great wilderness of city life—'Save, O God! these infants—these immortal souls!'

"Or, go *not* there! pass by, like Priest and Levite, on the other side! Let liberty riot in squalor, equality confound virtue and vice, fraternity make kindred of civilization's outcasts, to undermine the fabric of society. Let

the speculator herd in his tenant-house a thousand likenesses of men and women and children, without the comforts or accommodations vouchsafed to the horse in his stall or the dog in his kennel. Let these crowded receptacles of poverty be made pest-houses by the foulness of their surroundings, till the air of heaven is tainted in their neighborhood, the waters made bitter, the sunlight clouded with the smoke of their torture arising unceasingly. Let the gambler cast out his lines, to entrap the hopes and longings of want; let the vender of poison sit at the gates of penury, selling his drugs for their priceless souls. Let the law-officers lurk in their pathways, to punish them for crimes; but let no gentle hand interpose to deter them from its commission. Let sin entice, and virtue repel them; and, when all is over, let the statistician chronicle the ratios of their misery and crime—the moralist sigh over the statistician's revelations, and the political economist shake his head, and mutter 'there is no remedy.' Go not thither, into the city's enormities, then, O flippant political economist! but, oh! go thither Christian men and women, and rebuke by your ministrations the apathy of Priest and Levite—the heartlessness of those who take no note of the woes and the shames around them. And fear not to rebuke them, just men and women! for, in the sight of Heaven and of Humanity, of what account are such beings? By what right do they breathe the free air, eat of the earth's fruits, walk in the light of day, and yet bear no share in the great work for which man was created? Of what weight in the scale of human progress is the man-vulture, preying on all that can gratify his

selfish appetites—the man-moth, fluttering uselessly in the blaze of fashion—or the man-sloth, hanging listlessly on the great life-tree which, in its growth, sustains his parasitic existence? How regard they unblushingly the busy insect and the toiling worm? how escape they the curse that smote the barren fig-tree—'cut it down! why cumbereth it the earth?'

"Can we fathom the limitless ether, or trace the rays of planets back to the great fountain of their light? How, then, can we circumscribe the growth of that mind whose Present reveals no glimpse of its future? How dare we, in neglecting or spurning the work of our Present, annihilate so much of the means set apart from the Beginning towards our own moral growth, and thus lose our linked place in the infinite chain of existence? Rather, on the other hand, let each human being develop the resources of his own soul, by aiding in the development of other souls; thus forever educating himself for the great cycles of Eternity's progression. It is blasphemy to scoff at the improvement of even the meanest human mind, when we behold blank idiots educated into reflection, and see the dark and silent prison-houses of the blind, the deaf, and the dumb, made luminous by the reflex of outer light, and melodious with the inflowing harmonies of a loving teacher's care—till the mental desert becomes fragrant with culture, and not only a clue to the world is afforded, but a glimpse of heaven beyond. History, Science, Revelation itself, impart to us but conjectural ideas of the extent to which mind may be cultivated through contact with kindred mind. The speculations of to-day may be

to-morrow's convictions and the future's truths. A thread of thought may furnish the guide-line through a labyrinth of metaphysics. Who, then, shall predict the destiny of the child born yesterday, or venture to bound the knowledge he may be capable of compassing? Though its cradle be the vile and reeking hillock that fronts the wretched hovel of a rag-picker—though the first educative forces brought to bear upon its senses and soul be squalor, strife, and misery—yet, O Christian Samaritan! pluck him from but the influences of these—cleanse his infant body, and purify his childish mind—place him, weed though he seem, under the cultivation allowed to fairer human growths—exalt him in the image of God, with his face upturned to the light of Heaven—and then leave it to the infidel alone to dare, in word or thought, to circumscribe the power of the Almighty in developing that child's intellect and soul!"

Walter paused, and Hubert started abruptly, as a knock sounded, this instant, at the street door. The Irishman, however, manifested neither satisfaction at what had been read, nor surprise at the alarm that interrupted so philosophic a disquisition. Poor fellow! he had long since relapsed into sleep, and was, it is very likely, dreaming of a hedge school-house or mountain whisky-still. Walter laid down his manuscript, with an indignant gesture, and exclaimed—

"'Tis the way of the world to take no heed of its counsellors. This Milesian is no worse than the rest. God bless us! my head aches with reading, brother Hubert. But—it was a knock—*she* comes, perhaps!"

"I fear so, Walter!"

An impatient rattle of the closed shutter followed this remark, whereat Hubert hastily lit a candle, and going to the entry, opened the door. The next moment, he re-entered, supporting a female figure, which bore heavily against him, as he advanced into the room, and, ere he could prevent it, swayed to one side from his hold, and fell heavily to the floor.

"She is intoxicated, brother," said Walter, stepping from his room, and peering with his clear eyes from under the mass of white hair that covered his forehead.

"Heaven help me! yes!" answered Hubert. "Alas! I expected it! But I must get her to bed, if possible, without waking those poor men." He stooped, as he spoke, and raised the woman's face, which had fallen prone upon the floor.

It was the face of one who might be forty years of age, though, in the situation she then was, it appeared much older. Her hair hung in disordered masses over her cheeks, and straggled about her neck. Her blood-shot eyes were without expression, and her head swayed, as Hubert lifted it, helplessly to and fro. She opened her lips, on which froth was gathered, essaying, apparently, to speak, but only an indistinct murmur came from them.

"Maria!" said her unhappy husband, in a plaintive tone. "Maria! do you know me?"

A gurgling sound in the woman's throat was her only audible response; but she threw her arm up, and let it fall against Hubert, who took her hand.

"Maria, will you go to bed?"

The wretched wife's eyes rolled, and a noise like a laugh was emitted from her lips. Hubert glanced nervously towards the immigrant in his chair, and the wounded man stretched upon the settee, and seemed relieved in noticing that they had not been disturbed.

"Walter," said he, "open the bed-room door, while I try to lift her in. She was never so far gone before!"

He passed his arm under her relaxed figure, as he spoke, and raising her from the floor, supported her to the chamber. Walter, meantime, hastened to do as his brother had requested, but was anticipated; for there, on the threshold, stood the young daughter, Alice, her small hands clasped together, and her eyes, full of anguish, fixed upon the face of her drunken mother.

When the husband had laid his insensible partner upon the bed, Alice assisted in removing her parent's bedraggled clothes, all torn and blotched by frequent falling upon the muddy streets through which she had wandered homeward. Fast and thickly fell her tears the while, till at length the shameful spectacle of brutish intoxication was hidden beneath the covering of the curtained bed; then the child stole to her father, who had seated himself once more, in unspeakable grief, and, climbing upon his knees, kissed his face again and again, in mute sympathy. Hubert embraced her in silence.

It was an affecting sight—the father and daughter mingling their tears, without a word, while the degraded object of their solicitude lay, like a dead thing, in her bed, unconscious even of the hands that placed her there. Walter looked in upon them, a moment, from the outer

room, and then closed the door softly, and went to his own closet, with its shelves and table full of manuscripts. Not a long time, however, elapsed before Hubert came forth again, having kissed Alice, as the poor child crept upon the bed beside her mother; and, after arranging the pillow under the head of their sleeping patient, and constructing a couch for the immigrant, with some chairs and old garments, he replenished the fuel in the stove, and then sat down by his brother's door, leaning his head against the lintels, wearied, exhausted, but sleepless. And Walter—the philosopher, the theorist—trimmed his midnight lamp, and went on with his never-ceasing task of writing a great book on "Humanity and its Necessities." Perhaps it occurred to him, and to his brother Hubert, that a great Necessity was suggested in their very midst that solemn Sabbath night! As they looked upon the maimed sufferer sleeping upon the settee, and upon the homeless immigrant, and as they thought of *her* who lay within the next room, a besotted victim to strong drink—perhaps, I say, both reflected upon the Necessity that more than *theory* should go forth into the world—that practice, human and Christian PRACTICE, ought to interpose its saving hands, to guide the erring, restrain the unthinking, and pluck the falling from those gulfs, and quicksands, and precipices, that lie so bewilderingly in their path.

But, whether Walter's mind dwelt upon this theme, or not, he still wrote on, by the dim light of his pendant lamp, whilst his strange eyes lost none of their brightness, and his ruddy cheek still glowed under the hoary locks

that fell down upon it. Walter did not think of himself, or of the lapse of time, but of his work, "Humanity and its Necessities;" and therefore was it that his sister-in-law, the drunken woman on the bed, had told the child Alice that her white-haired uncle was crazed.

Chapter XXIV.

A Day in the Orphan's Life.

EMILY and Margaret were both early risers, and on the Monday morning following their night's companionship, after Harry and Fanny had been dressed and served with their simple meal, and the two girls had also breakfasted, they sat down to consult upon Emily's future plans. The seamstress was mother, as well as sister, in her interest for the orphan, and therefore it was not strange that the latter felt relieved and strengthened in relying upon her. It was arranged that Emily should remain in the apartments at Foley's Barracks, so long the home of her mother, and that, after the close of a week, Margaret should remove from Kolephat College, to reside with her adopted sister—not only because their dwelling together would be more economical for both, but because the tenant-house in which Emily resided was in a somewhat better neighborhood, bad as it might be, than the squalid locality under Peleg Ferret's supervision, and the rooms, moreover, were larger and less inconvenient to reach.

"But we must see Mr. Granby about it," said Margaret, smiling; "for I have promised him to be a teacher."

"A teacher!" echoed Emily.

"Yes, dear—that is to say, a Sabbath-school teacher, here in Kolephat College tenant-house. Don't you think our little Fanny will be a very useful assistant?" continued the seamstress, presently, drawing to her knee the child, who had been conning an alphabet with Harry.

"But that is a grand idea, Margaret—a Sabbath-school in a tenant-house!" said Emily. "What a deal of good it would do! for, only think of the number of children living in Kolephat College, or Foley's Barracks, or" ——

"Or any other tenant-house, Emily! yes, indeed! children who all possess immortal souls, too, dear sister; and yet are permitted to run wild upon the streets, never hearing a prayer, and, many of them, knowing not if there be a God!"

"How dreadful!" cried Emily.

"How true!" rejoined the seamstress. "Indeed, I have often wept over it; and thought, if (God forbid!) Harry should be left without a protector, how he might be like other poor children that we constantly meet in these wretched places—growing up without care, without culture, and, indeed, like rank weeds. And so, when Mr. Granby, yesterday, suggested that these neglected ones might be brought together, with proper treatment, and was good enough to say he would bear any expenses that the school might be under, my heart was full of thankfulness, and I seemed to see at once a sphere in which I could be useful, and, perhaps, do a little good."

"Oh, Margaret!" cried Emily, throwing herself, weep-

ing, upon her friend's breast, "you are doing good all the time. You are a blessing to all of us."

"Hush, Emily!" said the seamstress, in her low voice, as she kissed the orphan's forehead. "See, my child! Harry and Fanny are crying, too."

It was, indeed, so; for the little ones, listening to Margaret's words, had seemed to catch their meaning, and were now holding each other's hands, whilst tears streamed from their eyes.

"Come—I was forgetting entirely my morning duties, Emily!" cried the seamstress. "What a careless creature I am, to neglect my poor old baby up stairs."

"Poor old baby," echoed Harry, laughingly, his grief changing to smiles in a moment, as he heard his sister's light tones. "That's the old miser, Margery."

"Fie, Harry! you must not call him miser!—he is a poor old man."

"All the people call him miser, sissy," persisted Harry.

"No matter—you must not, brother. But, Emily, dear, you are wondering who we are talking about. Presently, you shall see my patient, who is getting better, though he has been quite sick. I must get his gruel ready."

Saying this, the seamstress began to prepare a mixture of oaten meal, with milk and water, which she allowed to simmer a few moments, and then poured, steaming, into a bowl.

"Now, come with me, Emily," cried she gaily, and led the way, followed by the wondering orphan, out into the passage-way, and up the rickety staircase that led to the room of Mallory the Miser.

The old man lay upon a rude but (thanks to Margaret) cleanly couch, spread in the corner nearest his fireless hearth. His thin hair was smoothed neatly back, and a linen bandage, bound around his forehead over the wound which he had received in his struggle with Keeley, caused his ashy features to appear very ghastly and cadaverous. But a marked change was visible in the miser's eyes; they seemed to have lost the red fire that had imparted so hateful an expression to his furtive glances, and were comparatively calm and gentle in their look. As the seamstress drew near, Mallory raised his head nervously from the pillow, but let it fall back at once, while something akin to a smile trembled on his thin lips.

"How do you feel now, Mr. Mallory?" asked Margaret, in her pleasant voice.

"Better, avick, much better," replied the old man. "You're very good to me, you are."

"See, I have brought something nice, and you must drink it all, for it's warm, and will do you good," said the seamstress. "Let me feel your pulse," continued she, taking his shrunken hand. "Oh! the fever is gone! and your head—that is quite cool, and all without a doctor! Emily," she added, turning to her companion, "am I not a good nurse?"

"Yes," muttered the miser; "I am so poor, you know, Miss! a doctor would want money, but I—I have not a cent." The old man's eyes began to roll, as he said this.

"You forget," said Margaret, gently. "Don't you know I found some silver pieces on the floor, in the straw?"

"Yes, yes!—I've got that, avick. But it's all—it's all, honey! It's *here*, you know!" He lifted his pillow, as he spoke, disclosing a few silver coins wrapped in a bit of gauze rag. "This is all—every penny. Musha! I'm poor, poor—a miserable ould beggar man."

"Well, maybe we shall all be rich, by-and-by," said the seamstress, pleasantly, noticing the perturbed manner of her charge. "Now, drink some of this good gruel, please."

"Yes, yes! thank you—thank you, Miss. It's a good girl you are, to come to the ould man. I wish I was rich for your sake, avick, to give you a present."

"There, do not talk, but drink your gruel," said Margaret, proffering the beverage. Then, as the old man partook greedily of it, she began to busy herself in arranging his pillow, and smoothing the clothes upon his bed. Mallory, meanwhile, watched both her and her companion, with a half-suspicious scrutiny, but, nevertheless, did not relinquish his bowl of gruel till he had drained its last drop. Then, sinking back on the pillow, he muttered—

"Thank you—it's good ye are to me."

"And our Heavenly Father is good to all of us," answered the seamstress, solemnly.

"What's that?" cried the old man, quickly; upon which Margaret quietly repeated her observation.

"It's all blarney," returned Mallory, peevishly. "Who bid you say that to me?"

"Do you not like to hear Our Father spoken of?" asked the seamstress, in her low, sweet tone, as she drew

close to Mallory's side, and bent over him. The evil red glare lighted in the dotard's eyes again, and he spat with his lips upon the bed.

"If you've nothing to tell me but that, you might keep from me: I want no praste-craft here."

Emily shuddered, and drew back, as her glance encountered that of the miser; but Margaret only bent nearer, and laid her hand softly upon his.

"You are not feeling well, now," she said. "I will come again when you are better. Good-morning."

"And l'ave the religion behind, plaze," muttered the dotard. "D'ye mind?"

"Good-by," said Margaret, smiling pleasantly; and then, taking Emily's arm, hurried noiselessly from the room, and down the stairs, while Mallory turned over moodily on his pillow.

"Poor old man!" said the seamstress, when, with Emily, she reached her own apartments. "I fear he is an atheist."

"An atheist! how frightful! what can you do, Margaret?—he was so angry, when you spoke to him!"

"We shall see!" replied Margaret; and at that moment, a strange but lovely responsibility, seemed to glide into her heart—a responsibility linked with the immortal soul of the miser, Mallory. She said no more, however, but proceeded to make Harry, and Fanny (who was to accompany him, for the first time), ready for the primary school which her brother attended. Emily, meantime, prepared to depart for Foley's Barracks, whence she designed to go at once to her place of em-

ployment ; for the poor have no leisure to devote to idle grief, even though dearest ones are taken from them. Perchance, in reality, this is no hardship ; as occupation of mind or body is often an antidote for sorrow that might otherwise consume the spirits ; nevertheless, it was not without a sigh that the young girl, a few hours after this, resumed her place in the circle of her fellow workwomen, and began to ply her needle in the task allotted to her. Mrs. Florette, the modiste, spoke very kindly to her, indeed, inquiring concerning her recent bereavement, and there were looks and words of sympathy from some who had known affliction like herself ; but still memory would dwell upon her loss, and tears blinded the eyes of poor Emily, as she bent them closely upon the fabric she was sewing. At noon, Mrs. Florette came into the little back parlor, and calling the young girl to her, informed her that she had a pleasant commission for her to perform.

"There is an elegant lady, one of my dear favorite patrons," said the Frenchwoman, somewhat enthusiastically, "who wishes to have some dresses made up, at her home, because she seldom comes out ; and I have placed you at her service, for which you must be very grateful, as she is the gentlest lady in the world, and will treat you well, my good child. It will be so much better for you, in your trouble, than the shop—is not that true ?"

"Oh, indeed, Madame Florette, I am very thankful to you," answered Emily, the tears rising more thickly to her eyes. "You are very, very thoughtful and kind."

"So you will go with this lovely lady, in her carriage,

at once," continued Mrs. Florette; "and I hope to hear a very good report of you."

The other needlewomen congratulated Emily on the good fortune, as they all esteemed it, which had befallen her; and, in truth, it was good fortune to be permitted to leave the hot atmosphere of that close work-room, and breathe, even though for a brief season, in the light-some, airy rooms that wealth and taste make common to their possessors, but which, to the dwellers between tenant-house walls, or in narrow places of toil, seem like far-off Edens of social life. Then, accompanying Mrs. Florette to the front parlor, or sales-room, as it was called, the sewing-girl was presented to a lady, who was richly dressed, and of much grace and beauty, but of a pale countenance, and eyes that were full of a sorrowing expression. Emily felt instantly attracted to this lady, who took her hand, and said, in a low, sweetly-modulated voice—

"Madame Florette has been speaking to me of your skill in needlework, Miss; and she permits me to take you home with me—if you are willing!"

"Oh, madam, I shall try to deserve," —— Emily paused, trembling with emotion.

"We shall get along very well, I am sure," said the stranger, with a re-assuring smile, in noticing Emily's agitation. "Are you quite ready now, Miss?"

Emily answered in the affirmative, and shook hands with Mrs. Florette. Then stepping with the lady into a private carriage, at the door, she was quickly rolled away through busy thoroughfares, towards the upper portion of

the city. In a few moments, the young girl found herself in the boudoir of her new friend.

There are some rare natures in this world of ours, that possess the happy power to diffuse, as it were, an aroma of consolation and peace upon all around them; and it was in the presence of such a nature that Emily Marvin now found herself. The kind words, and gentle, thoughtful manner of the lady, seemed to assert at once a sway over the orphan's confidence, and it was not long before she had related to her all the history of her mother's life and death.

"You have, indeed, been sorely tried, my child," remarked the listener to this simple recital. "I, too, have known the desolation of loneliness, and can sympathize with your bereavement." The lady sighed deeply as she spoke, and Emily fancied that a tear trembled on her eyelid. "But you spoke to me of a sister—or friend," ——

"A sister! yes, indeed, Margaret is both friend and sister!" said Emily. "She is a hard-working girl, madam, supporting, by her needle, a young brother; but she is, indeed, one whom I love as if she were my sister."

In such conversation, the afternoon of Emily's first employment in the house of her new friend, passed quickly away, and long before twilight, the lady bade her lay aside the needle, and sit at the little tea-table spread for herself in the boudoir; and afterwards, when, bidding good-night, she left the mansion, with its rich furniture and soft carpets, and ornamented walls, to hurry homeward to Foley's Barracks, Emily felt as if she had left

behind a kindly vision, out of which followed her always a pale face, full of sorrowful thought, but very sweet and beautiful.

At Foley's Barracks, the vision vanished all away, and only her mother's bed, in the lone chamber, appeared, causing the orphan to sit down, weeping bitterly, and feeling herself desolate again. But a voice, rough, but cheerful, interrupted the grief to which she was giving way.

"Sakes, Miss—an' it's you, sure enough! I heard your step on the stairs, and says to 'Till, says I, 'That's Emily Marvin, I do believe!' An' how do you do, dear? What!—not cryin' again? Well, now I do say that's not right! Come, Miss, cheer up, cheer up. You don't know all the news I've got to tell you But, mercy me! it's cold as a barn here. 'Till shall make a fire for you at once. Here, 'Till—Ma-til-da!"

Good Mrs. Dumsey's voice was nearly exhausted by her somewhat hurried preface, so that the call for her eldest did not reach the pitch intended, but broke down abruptly at the second syllable of her daughter's name.

"Laws me! I do believe I'm getting short-winded, Miss," she said, apologetically, and was about to repeat her summons, but Emily interposed.

"I'm not at all cold, dear Mrs. Dumsey. I was going to call round on Margaret Winston, presently. So, I think I'll not make up a fire to-night."

"An' you've been to work hard all day, poor child?" remarked Mrs. Dumsey. "You must be real tired, an' I've jes' got a nice cup o' tea ready, down stairs. Come right away down, and eat somethin'."

Emily protested that she had taken tea, but Mrs. Dumsey would hear no denial of her hospitality, averring that "the poor child must be half starved," and that she herself had "all sorts o' news" to tell her ; so that, in a few moments, the orphan was obliged to be seated at the good nurse's table, opposite to its portly mistress, with the female scions of the race on either hand, and Master Thomas making mouths at her, while he sulked behind his mother's chair.

"Yes ! indeed, and news enough," cried the good woman ; "and if you was to guess and guess, you couldn't hit upon who's been here to see you this blessed day."

"To see me ?" asked Emily, looking surprised.

"You, and nobody else—and stood full an hour talkin' all about you. No, indeed, you couldn't guess."

Emily admitted the correctness of this assertion, whereupon Mrs. Dumsey, who was manifestly impatient to make her revelation, informed the orphan that it was—"a gentleman."

"Ah ! the nicest young man—the very same that saw you when you was a-faintin', and called to-day to ask all about it. Deed an' truth, he *is* a gentleman, Miss. An'—what else do you think ? But you couldn't guess, I'll be bound."

Emily remained silent, not knowing how to reply to the loquacity of her hostess, who thereupon, with many mysterious winks and shrugs, rose from the table, and went to her little back room, whence she returned immediately, bearing triumphantly aloft a fragrant hot-house bouquet. Master Tommy shouted lustily, as he caught sight of the

flowers; and Mrs. Dumsey's eldest daughter was obliged at once to restrain him from violent efforts to obtain possession of them.

"They're mine, they're mine!" screamed the youthful Dumsey, making severe demonstrations with his small boots upon his sister Matilda's person.

"Deed an' they're none o' yours, child," rejoined his mother. "Jes' shet up this minute, or 'Till shall put you to bed. No, Miss Marvin, they're all your own, and the sweetest-smellin' bowket that ever was growed, I do believe. Take a good sniff o' them posies, and see if it ain't, for all the world, like a country garding."

Saying this, the good woman handed Emily the bouquet, after a long inhalation of its perfume, and then proceeded to relate how the "nice young gentleman—Mr. Peyton was his name—and sich eyes was in his head"—had left this bunch of posies "for herself and nobody else, with his compliments, and would call again."

"Call again," said Emily. "Why, dear Mrs. Dumsey, he is a stranger—and what can he want with me?"

Mrs. Dumsey only smiled, and remarked that "people took likings sometimes, and no wonder to her, for somebody *she* knew was good and pretty enough to be a queen, like Cinderella and the glass slipper;" and then she patted the orphan's cheek, and bent her good-natured face down, to take another "sniff" of the "posies," while Emily remained silent, half-frightened at receiving the gift, and yet not displeased, in her young heart, at the thought of having inspired an interest in the stranger who had left it. Neither unnatural nor unfeminine was her

emotion, and He who read the orphan's heart might pardon the innocent vanity that made her smile, even through tears, as she looked at the fragrant flowrets.

A little while afterwards, when Tommy had been "pacified" by summary incarceration in the back room, and Mrs. Dumsey had enjoyed a parting inhalation of the bouquet, Emily bade good-by to her hostess, and passing down the staircase of Foley's Barracks, and out upon the streets, clasping the flowers under her shawl, hurried towards the dwelling of her friend and sister, Margaret. She had not proceeded far, however, before her name was uttered by a man who followed closely, and turning, she recognized in the light of a street-lamp—for it was now dusk—the well-known figure of Mr. Jobson.

"Ah, little lady! where are you travelling to, so fast?" said the agent, with a smile that was intended to be peculiarly affable, as he brought his cane and patent-leather boots on a line with the little feet that had stopped suddenly, when their owner's name was called.

"Good-evening, sir!" said Emily, respectfully, as the agent took her hand. Then, answering his question, she remarked that she was going but a short distance, to call upon a friend.

"If that be the case, I must walk with you, little lady. You mustn't mind me, you know—I'm an old friend of the family, you know. Where have you been these two or three days, Miss? for I've called several times to see you."

Emily's heart sank, as she heard this; for she was aware of a month's rent being in arrears, and feared that Mr. Jobson had called in relation to *that*.

"Please, sir," she said, hesitatingly, "if it would not be asking too much, I shall earn enough by next week; and" ——

"Oh!—I did not call about money, my dear Miss! Oh, no, indeed—wouldn't have you suppose it. Mrs. Dumsey told me about the scamp that stole your purse, you know; and—oh! don't, I beg, trouble yourself about the rent, Miss."

Emily raised her glance, in wonder, at the agent's face, as he walked beside her; for this unusual manifestation of forbearance on the part of one proverbial, in the tenant-house, for exacting the uttermost farthing of rent, on the very morning when due, appeared a real miracle of benevolence. But, if she desired to express a grateful sense of her appreciation of Jobson's kindness, the wish was checked suddenly, as she noticed the peculiar look with which the broker was regarding her—a look beneath which her own gaze sank instantly abashed; and she felt troubled and perplexed—she knew not why.

"Mrs. Dumsey said you was out at work, Miss. I'm really afeard you work too hard, now—ain't it so?"

Emily replied that she liked to be employed, whereupon Mr. Jobson remarked that "all work and no play made Jack a dull boy," and that a young lady ought not to kill herself for other people.

"You ain't got your mother on your hands now, Miss, you know; and a young, intelligent lady, like yourself, ought not to be a slave, you know." ——

"But I must work, to live, Mr. Jobson," said Emily. "And I am very sure I am much happier in being em-

ployed than in being idle, even if I could afford to live without work."

"Oh, yes!" answered the agent. "But, then, you know, you had to leave school, where you was getting educated, as Mrs. Dumsey says, and now you must go out every day, you know, Miss, rain or shine. It ain't quite pleasant, is it, Miss?"

Emily said she did not mind it.

"But, you'd a *leetle* rather stayed at school?"

"Yes—I love school," said Emily, sighing, in remembrance of pleasant hours, ere the illness of Widow Marvin had rendered it necessary for her daughter to take up the routine of daily toil. "I was very, very happy at school."

Jobson slackened his pace, and spoke in a low tone.

"How would you like to go to school again, Miss? I was a-thinkin' we might arrange it for you very nicely—so you could go to school, and live like a lady. I ventur' to say, I could find the money to pay for a little girl's schooling—if she'd only love me a bit for it."

Emily glanced again at Jobson, who had paused in the walk, and fixed his eyes upon her face. The agent's countenance was full of amiability—his lips smiling, his eyes very benevolent in their expression; and, as he raised his cane to his chin, and drew up his portly frame, he might have been taken, from the top of his shining beaver to the soles of his polished boots, as an incarnation of philanthropic tenant-house brokerage and orphanage protection. Nevertheless, there was an unaccountable something about the worthy agent, as he thus displayed himself to the young sewing-girl, that impressed her with emotions

very different from those of gratitude at the kind intentions expressed in his language. She felt, indeed, that she would rather be away from the side of this smooth gentleman in broadcloth, who had declared himself "an old friend of the family;" that she would rather be, that moment, in the little room of her friend the seamstress, with Margaret's clear eyes shining down upon her; and, unconsciously, as it were, at the same time, she pressed to her bosom the bouquet that she held beneath her shawl, as if she would rather think of that, and its fragrance, than of the words which Jobson had just spoken so softly to her. Perhaps the contact of those sweet flowers imparted strength to Emily—perhaps their perfume made her less fearful of the agent; for, the next moment, she found courage to say—

"Mr. Jobson, I shall never go back to school! I am a poor girl, but my dear mother taught me not to be ashamed to work for my living. I shall never forget her counsels, and God will protect me while I try to be good and contented."

Mr. Jobson, the broker, who was used to meet with "all sorts of tenants," as he himself remarked, and who never failed, as he boasted, in frightening any of them, when he "set out to do it," appeared, at this moment, standing beside the fragile sewing-girl, to be shorn of half his usual swelling proportions. The tone in which Emily uttered her last words was so distinct, and her clear eyes rested so calmly upon his own, that, albeit he was landlord and she tenant—he creditor and she delinquent debtor—he, man of means and authority, and she timid, shrink-

ing maiden—yet, for the first time in his life, Mr. Jobson felt bereft of his dignity, and humbled in the presence of poverty and weakness. He walked a few steps farther, beside the sewing-girl, and essayed a remark or two, interjected with attempts to clear his throat, but he was glad when the next corner was reached, giving him an opportunity of bidding his "little lady" an abrupt good-bye, after which, with some violent rappings of his cane's ferule against the pavement, he walked hastily away, leaving Emily to hurry onward in the direction of Kolephat College, where she soon arrived, and threw herself, breathless and weeping, into the arms of the kind seamstress.

A recital of the day's incidents, poured into the attentive ears of her friend, relieved the orphan's heart; for Margaret's gentle nature responded entirely to her yearnings for sympathy, while the stronger faith of one who had been more sorely tried than herself was well suited to sustain her spirit, agitated by conflicting emotions. Perhaps it was the memory of other days, in her own experience, that imparted a sorrowing cast to the smile with which Margaret took from Emily's hand the bunch of flowers that she had kept close in her bosom; perchance the sigh which the seamstress heaved had much to do with blossoms that once nestled near her own heart, but had withered since, leaving only the ashes of their crumbled leaves as tokens that they once existed.

But if aught of bitterness was recalled to Margaret's recollection, as she now listened to Emily's relation, no shadow fell from her transparent forehead upon her young

friend's face. Her voice was soft as ever, and her glance kindly.

"Beautiful flowers!" she murmured; "so fresh and sweet in this cold winter month!"

"Dear Margery! let me and Fanny smell," said Harry, running to his sister's side. "Oh! Fanny! isn't it sweet! Oh! what real pretty flowers! Wouldn't you like to have a bunch like that, Fanny?"

"I'd like just one little rosy," ventured the child.

"To put in water, Fan?" asked Harry.

"No! not for myself," said Fanny, earnestly.

"Why, who for, then?" cried the boy. "Oh, I know! —for Rob."

"No! not for Rob—for—for" ——

"Well, dear," said Emily encouragingly, as she noticed that the child hesitated, and raised her dove-like eyes timidly towards the seamstress.

"I'd like to give it to the poor old gentleman up stairs, that's sick. He's so lonesome, please."

"Bless you, you darling, you shall have all you like!" exclaimed Emily, the tears gushing to her eyes, as she quickly disengaged a portion of the bouquet. Margaret was likewise much affected, and whispered to her friend—

"Fanny went with me this afternoon to see the poor man, and he seemed much attracted by her. She is a very thoughtful child."

Harry received a bud and some green leaves, with which he was greatly pleased, but immediately tendered them to his little companion to add to her own. It was then agreed that Fanny should accompany Margaret,

when the latter went with her customary bowl of gruel to Mallory's room; meantime, Emily and the seamstress continued their conversation, the former dwelling much upon that kind lady who had engaged her services in making up dresses in the fine house up town. The young girl became, indeed, voluble in expressing her admiration of this new friend.

"Oh, indeed, dear Margaret! she is all I describe—so lovely, and sweet-tempered, and yet so melancholy! though how a lady so rich, with everything elegant around her, can be *sad*, I cannot imagine."

"Ah, Emily! we know not how much misery may be the lot of the rich!—perhaps the harder to bear because in contrast to the luxury around them. Is this lady married?"

"Oh, yes! her husband is a very fine man—immensely rich, and very handsome! I saw his portrait on the wall. And Mrs. Richmond must be very much attached to him, for" ——

"Sissy, oughtn't Fanny to tie up her flowers?" here interrupted Harry. Margaret did not answer, and presently the boy screamed loudly, and ran to her knee. "Oh, dear! oh, dear! sissy is going to faint!" he cried, piteously; and at the moment, Margaret's form relaxed, and she would have fallen from her chair, had not Emily caught her in her arms.

There was an instant consternation in the little circle, Harry clinging to his sister's arm, and Fanny beginning to weep, while Emily felt the greatest alarm in witnessing her friend's pallid face, closed eyes, and parted lips, as she

supported her. Exerting all her strength, she succeeded in placing the insensible seamstress in a recumbent position, her head sustained by a pillow that Harry brought immediately, together with a vial of hartshorn, which restorative she applied to the poor girl's nostrils and temples. At the same time, she spoke soothingly to the boy, assuring him that his sister would quickly revive.

"Oh, I'm so 'fraid sissy'll die," sobbed Harry. "She said, sometime she might die in a faintin'-fit."

"Does she have them often?" asked Emily, much agitated at Margaret's situation.

"'Most every week," answered the child. "Once she was faintin', on the floor, when I came from school, and I thought she'd never come to! O, dear Miss Emily, won't you make her open her eyes? Oh! I'm afraid she'll die."

And, indeed, it was a long time before the seamstress, breathing a heavy sigh, slowly awoke to consciousness. At last, however, Harry's eyes grew bright through their tears, and Fanny's hands, that had been clasped in mute terror, were permitted to touch the neck of her kind protectress. But, when the seamstress, still pale and weak, leaned back in her chair, and said that she "was subject" to these fainting-fits, and that they were "soon over," though, indeed, the doctor feared they would "sometime be fatal," then Emily realized—though she made no remark—how much of lonesome suffering, how much of patient endurance, must have been the portion of this uncomplaining one, toiling, through long days and nights, and sinking at times from exhaustion upon the floor, while her infant brother was at school. "But she shall not be

so lonely again," murmured the orphan to herself. "I will be near this good creature, who never thinks of herself, but always of others." And it was with deeper sisterly affection than she had before felt that Emily kissed her friend's lips, and clasped to her bosom with renewed interest the now happy and prattling children.

Chapter XXV.

Peleg Ferret's Monday.

MR. PELEG FERRET rose betimes on the Monday following his interview with Mordecai Kolephat; for the recollection of certain pecuniary inducements suggested by his Hebrew employer made the thrifty agent anxious to begin his search for that gentleman's lost child. The fear and trembling of Kolephat College tenantry began at an earlier hour, even, than was usual on weekly rent-days, and consequently there were more numerous threats of ejectment, more earnest appeals for lenity, and, perhaps, a more generally diffused panic, from roof to cellar of the rickety premises, than had been known during the previous hard months of the winter season.

The seamstress, Margaret, had, as usual, been ready with her scanty savings, to meet the agent's summons. Old Mallory had resigned, in dismay, a few of the silver coins that he clutched beneath his bed-covering. The ancient Irishwoman, who occupied a rear room on the third floor (and whose children, at service, paid her rent); the little German tailor, sitting cross-legged all day in a wretched apartment, eight feet square, where, with a consumptive wife, he toiled, ate, drank, or sang (half-stifled,

while warmed, by the open furnace that heated his iron goose); the four young girls, in front rooms, who wore gaudy ribbons, and were never without money; the old negro cripple, who did odd jobs for the neighborhood, and burrowed in a kennel-like closet under the staircase; the beetle-browed Englishman who stole out after night-fall and crept back near morning, to abuse his delicate wife, and who, the rumor ran, was a burglar or river-thief; the shabby genteel gentleman, on the first floor, who wore a rusty brown coat and napless hat, and bought ink by the penny's worth at the grocery, and whom Mr. Ferret employed occasionally to post his accounts, and who was said to be writing a story-book; the rheumatic man, in the cellar, who was once a cartman and owned a horse, but had been run over and shattered to pieces, and now lay bed-ridden, while his wife took in slop-work to keep both out of the alms-house; the small widow, in a cap, with a sea-faring son, who sometimes came home, and got drunk daily while he stayed ashore; the black man, who worked on the wharves, and lived with his white wife in a decently-kept room at the head of the first flight of stairs; the asthmatic female, in a yellow turban, who took seven men boarders, in her two rooms, and sent her boy out to beg broken victuals wherewith to supply her table; the bright-eyed French flower-worker, on the first-floor, who embroidered and chirped all day long; the family of three young women, and their aged mother, who picked wool sixteen hours a day; the Italian people who kept dry maccaroni in the upper story; the Swiss boys, living in a back shed, and raising spearmint in boxes, to sell to

the keepers of bar-rooms; the beggar-woman, who came home at night with an infant, and gave it gin and paregoric to stupefy it till morning; the ——

But, O tenants of Kolephat College! why shall I enumerate your characteristics? why dwell upon your wretched vocations, your miserable life, your vile associations, your uncivilized habitudes? Suffice it, now, that Peleg Ferret, as was his wont, traversed the dingy close, from damp and noisome basement to shattered, rain-soaked attic, collecting here and there his dues—menacing the tardy, brow-beating the timid, and seasoning his demands with coarse jests, low innuendoes, and fierce abuse—till the tenant-house, as was customary when he visited it, seethed and boiled, as it were, with all the bitter feelings that are begotten of misery, malice, and petty tyranny.

Little recked Peleg, it is true, of these results of rent-day faithfulness, since he beheld in them only the perversity of tenant-nature; nevertheless, it is not probable that the collector's own disposition was ameliorated by his exercise of duty, or that, when at length he ascended to the dilapidated upper stories of the building, and knocked at the door of Phil Keeley's garret-room, his brow was anything the less frowning, or his voice more placid in its tones.

Phil Keeley's garret had undergone no improving change since the agent's visit on the previous week. The wind blew keenly as before, through crannies in the broken shingle roof, and water stood in dirty pools upon the rat-eaten floors, or oozed darkly from the rotten plastering. Ferret knocked once, and then, without

waiting for a response, opened the door, and walked forward.

The room was filled with smoke that puffed out from the foul chimney, and by the hearth, on which a few chips were burning, Keeley's wife sat, or rather squatted, her elbows resting on her knees, and her clenched hands supporting her chin, while she gazed vacantly into the embers. On her knees, at a little distance, appeared her daughter, Moll, and between the two was an old basket, in which were some fragments of cold meat and stale bread, the collection of a begging excursion from which the child had just returned. Moll was gnawing ravenously at a bone clutched in both her hands, and neither she nor her mother seemed to be aware of the agent's approach, till his harsh voice grated suddenly upon their ears, and his scowling countenance looked down upon them.

"Umph! enjoyin' yourselves—plenty to eat, I see; but where's the whisky-bottle?"

At the first word, Moll had dropped her bone, and cowered affrightedly away, but the woman glanced up defiantly, with teeth set and lips drawn down at the corners, but without answering Ferret's taunt.

"Where's that skulkin' husband of your'n?" pursued the collector, in a loud tone. "I gave you warnin' last week to stir your stumps from these premises, and here you are hangin' on, with near three weeks' rent doo. D'ye think I'm goin' to stand that, old woman?"

Still no reply came from Mrs. Keeley, though her eyes glared upwards, in dull fierceness, mingled with an

expression of despair. To another than Ferret, who was too accustomed to all shapes of wretchedness to trouble himself about making distinctions, the miserable woman would have appeared the very incarnation of human squalor. Her arms were bare, and so shrunken that hardly more than the bones, with shrivelled blue skin drawn over them, were visible; her forehead was stamped with the yellow signet of consumption's last stage; her cheeks were hollowed, and her lips so distorted that teeth and gums protruded from between them. It was manifest that she was dying from starvation and neglected disease; but Peleg Ferret saw in her atrophied form only a delinquent debtor, and her silence under his remarks merely served to increase his ill humor.

"Look here, old woman—hain't you got no tongue, or be you drunk? leastwise you might cuss a little, so I'd know it was you, and no mistake, you old catamaran! 'Twon't do to sham sick on me! I'm up to you, and out you go before this day's over—jes' you make up your mind to that, Miss Keeley."

Ferret had advanced, as he was speaking, shoving roughly past the child Moll, who had begun to moan bitterly, terrified at his threatening looks. He now stood with arms akimbo immediately over the drunkard's wife, whose voice was heard, for the first time, in reply to his words; not, indeed, in the quick, querulous manner that was natural to the woman's temperament, but with hoarse intonation, yet solemn distinctness.

"Ferret!" began Mrs. Keeley, "stoop down, man, till I whisper a word in your ear! I'm dyin' Ferret, an' ye'll

be obleeged to take me out o' this, feet foremost. But my blessin' to ye, for your good deeds, Ferret—d'ye mind me?"

Her long, bony arm was upraised, till the attenuated hand touched the agent, and made him shrink back from the contact. Her eyes grew preternaturally bright, and she set her teeth together, so that the gums were exposed between the receding lips. No wonder Peleg Ferret changed color, and stepped back a pace; for if the woman's glance had possessed basilisk power, it could not have glittered with more intense and unearthly hatred than it now exhibited.

"Ye gave the drink to Phil, till ye made him a sot an' a ruffian; ye brought us down from a decent home to this wild beast's den, that ye call Kolephat College—ye brought us from a comfortable bit an' sup to starvation and nakedness; an' now ye're come for your rint, Ferret—ye're come for your *rint!*"

As the woman paused, the agent tried to turn from the glance which shot out of her eyes, but she threw herself upwards, with a spasmodic effort, and clutching at his garments, held him firmly.

"Ye'll hear—ye'll hear me, Ferret," she shrieked, in a paroxysm of excitement, the reaction of her previous unnatural calmness. "Hold by, till I pray for you, Ferret—may the orphan's curse cling to ye!—Phil Keeley's wife will meet you at the bar o' God! may your heart wither out of your breast, and your soul go down to the black pit o'" ——

Peleg Ferret's yellow face grew crimson with fear and

rage, as with a great effort he withdrew his gaze from that of Mrs. Keeley, and, uplifting his heavily shod foot, dealt the miserable woman a violent kick which forced her back upon the floor. Then, ere the shrieking Moll could reach her mother's side, he strode, with a wrathful malediction, out of the garret, and down the rickety stairs, until he emerged into the alley, and thence sought his grocery. Hither summoning two brutal-featured negroes, a species of familiars attracted by the love of poisonous whisky around the purlieus of all such places—wretches in whose lineaments depravity struggled with stolidity, for the blotting out of human traits—he whispered to them a few words, serving out to each a glass of some execrable spirits, and hurrying them away. Then, turning to a nook behind his bar, wherein stood a high-raised desk, Peleg proceeded to count the sum total of his cash receipts, entering each item, as he proceeded, in sundry dingy books before him.

A brief space sufficed to transact this rent-day business, after concluding which, the collector once more sallied out upon the street, and bent his steps away from the locality of Kolephat's tenant-house. The effects of his interview with Mrs. Keeley were still noticeable in the soured looks that he cast about him, but, at the same time, other subjects occupied the man's thoughts. He had golden prospects before him, contingent on a successful search for the Jew's lost child, and as he proceeded on his way, a dozen schemes to compass his pursuit were entertained and dismissed in rapid succession. At length, however, a plan appeared to shape itself before his crafty mind, as was

apparent from the expression of satisfaction that began to be manifest in his features, and the quickened pace with which he traversed the thoroughfares.

Mordecai Kolephat, in his interview with the collector, had been unable, it is true, to give any certain data whereon to base a clue to the whereabouts of the stolen girl; but the little that he had gleaned from the rag-picker's dying revelation, and which he imparted to Ferret, afforded the latter sufficient matter for, at least, shrewd conjecture; and it was Peleg's resolution, in the first place, to direct his scrutiny to the occupants of the tenant-house neighborhood wherein Old Pris had breathed her last. With this determination uppermost, he soon found himself in the wretched pile of buildings, wherein dwelt the yellow dwarf Josh and his negress mother.

Ferret was no stranger to the domain which he now entered upon, for he had long regarded it with respect as a "paying property," and looked forward to a speedy agency of the premises, in behalf of their owner, Kolephat. He knew that it was densely populated, and that, therefore, a snug per centage could be realized out of the collection of its rents. It is true, the wooden hovels in the rear of its brick fronting were not of the cleanest description, nor devoted to the most sweet-smelling purposes; being inhabited by hordes of German rag-pickers and gatherers of bones in streets and gutters, who penetrated to their peculiar district through two narrow alleyways, and there lived, amid a surrounding of filth and malaria that would seem to be deadly to all human existence, and yet apparently exercised very little deleterious

influence upon the poison-proof denizens within. Peleg Ferret had sniffed the effluvia of rag-pickers' abodes on other visits before this, and knew how great heaps of bleaching market bones, canine and feline skeletons, fragments of mangled hides, with putrid meat clinging to them, and piles of garbage dragged from sink and sewer, were to be encountered by one who should seek them. He had seen, on other occasions, the long rope-lines extending from windows and chimneys of the wooden huts, and strung with dense bunches of rags, of every color, fluttering in the wind, which caught up their diseased and infectious exhalation to bear it away to other neighborhoods, depositing continually the seeds of slow decline or quick, unsparing disease. He was aware, likewise, that the tenants of those interior dwellings were crowded by threes, and fours, and often sevens, in narrow, close, and unventilated rooms, wherein they breathed the noxious gases generated by their own personal squalor and by vile concomitants of their wretched trade; that they devoted single apartments to the usage of sleeping, and eating, and rag-washing, and the boiling of bones, whence arose an atmosphere of fœtid steam, densifying in cold air, or brooding above their roofs in clouds charged with venomous matter. All these things were familiar to Peleg Ferret, though little recked he of their consequences; for he looked upon the tenant-house and its inmates as the field and subjects of his business thrift, and classified them merely by two qualifications—the "paying" and the "non-paying"—in the former of which category he placed the rag-pickers and bone-gatherers, and in the

latter an indistinguishable mass of various pauper designations.

But, before venturing into the interior close, inhabited by the rag-picking community, the agent knocked at the door of Josh, the mulatto, which was speedily opened by that personage. Some considerable alteration had taken place in the appearance of the apartment since the visit of Mordecai Kolephat and the death of Old Pris. The broken casement had been glazed, and now admitted some light of day to the interior, before so dark, and a flock mattress, and clothing, with a few cheap articles of furniture, relieved the dingy basement of the aspect of naked misery that it had previously worn. A fire was burning on the hearth, and altogether the place seemed comfortable—a change attributable to the dwarf's exalted fortune, as the possessor of the windfall brought by his lottery speculations.

But, if in point of a few necessary comforts the mulatto appeared to have bettered his condition, it was manifest, likewise, that he had not been unmindful of the superfluities of domestic life; for at this time there was another occupant of the apartment in addition to Josh and the dreaming hag, his mother. A girl of scarce eighteen years of age, with prepossessing features and not ungraceful figure, was reclining upon the bed, beside which sat the negress, and the two were drinking some hot beverage redolent of stale lemons and whisky. Ferret noticed these features of the dwarf's room, at a glance, as Josh removed a short pipe from his mouth, and invited him to enter.

"Walk in, master! Jes' say what I kin do for you," said the mulatto, with a roll of his eyes that indicated a somewhat deep indulgence in liquor, even at this early hour of the day.

"I want to talk to you about a woman that died here—'Old Pris,'" remarked the agent, in seating himself.

"Ugh!" rejoined the dwarf, as though something unpleasant had been recalled. "That ole critter is a mortal sight o' consequence since she went dead. There's ole Mr. Kolephat—he buried her, and" ——

"Well," replied Ferret, "it might be worth while to find out su'thin' about her, an' you mightn't lose nothin' by it."

"Well, sit down, master," said the mulatto. "Don't be skeered at my folks," he continued, observing that his visitor's eyes were directed towards the female portion of his family. "That ar' ole woman's my mother, an' the young 'un's my wife." The last words were accompanied by a chuckling laugh, which disclosed his discolored teeth and red gums.

Ferret looked keenly at the young girl, who only laughed, in a low tone, as she sipped her whisky; whereupon the agent laughed, also, and winked at the mulatto, saying—"You've got a nice wife, now, hain't you?"

Peleg Ferret then thought no more of the yellow dwarf's attractive-looking companion, who lolled upon the bed, but proceeded to his category of inquiries concerning the dead rag-picker and her recent associations. And why, indeed, should the agent of tenant-houses have mani-

fested wonder that a deformed mulatto could induce a young white girl to abandon her own race and live with him, in his negro-den, with a hag mother? What marvel could Ferret discover in the union of that distorted African offshoot, yellow-skinned and grizzled-locked, with a flaxen-haired, blue-eyed, and delicate-featured woman of Teutonic blood? Such consortings were to his eyes no new phase of tenant-house life; for many were the blacks and whites, of every grade, that the agent had collected his dues from, in the course of a business life. Peleg Ferret did not philosophize upon the matter—did not affect to account for the practical amalgamation so usual to his sight—did not speculate upon the moral and physical destitution that must precede the period at which a youthful white girl could resign herself to the society of a depraved and grotesque negro, merely because he might procure her for a season wherewith to eat, to drink, and to be clothed. What had the tenant-house agent to do with morals or decency, among the miserable denizens under his supervision? His business was to take the system as he found it, and out of it make the most. Consequently, after the first scrutinizing glance at the dwarf's helpmate, Peleg Ferret troubled himself no more about her. And in this, Peleg Ferret imitated the Christian world, that has so long contented itself with casual notice of the wrongs and shames in its midst, passing speedily to other themes, and becoming absorbed in other interests.

"Old Pris was mixed up a good deal with organ-grinders, and such people—heh?" suggested the agent,

after a few preliminary inquiries. "Didn't ye ever hear of any young g'rl she used to have around ?"

"No, master—not any g'rl that I ever heerd of," returned Josh. "She was a critter that used to keep to herself, and folks thought she had a pile o' money somewhere ; but I never seed any."

"Didn't leave you nothin', then ?" said Ferret, closing his left eye, and throwing back his head. "You took her in—but you didn't git anything, heh ?"

"That poor critter didn't have nothin'," returned Josh. "And when old Kolephat come here, she was a-lyin' jes' under them steps—a-dyin' fast. Mother, yander, said she had some pawn-tickets, but we couldn't find any when they laid her out."

"Some pawn-tickets—what for ?"

"Dunno, master—must ha' been lost ; 'cause they wan't nowhere when they washed the corpse."

The agent mused a moment, and then asked—

"Didn't nobody give you a shillin' for takin' care of her ?"

"Yes—Kolephat—he guv me a five-dollar bill, he did—and, yes, that ar' g'rl that come with ole Maria—she guv me a quarter, kind o' sly."

"What g'rl ?" asked Ferret, abruptly.

"Why, the g'rl that come with ole Maria."

"And who's Maria ?"

"Why, she's the mother of all the organ-grinders," answered Josh, with a chuckle, at his own humor, which almost strangled him. "She lives out in the rear, ye see, and Ole Pris used to be thick with her."

"That's enough!" muttered Peleg Ferret to himself; and then rising, asked the mulatto to direct him to the dwelling-place of Maria, which the dwarf did, with some circumlocution. Then, in order to impress his informant with a proper sense of the honor he had enjoyed in conversing with a distinguished visitor, the agent remarked that he should very shortly, it was probable, attend to Mr. Kolephat's business in "these ere premises." Under cover of this piece of information, so conveyed, Mr. Ferret backed out of the dwarf's room, relieving himself of the necessity of disbursing any small coin to the communicative proprietor, who thereupon returned to the society of his blue-eyed wife, whose lips he kissed before turning to another draught of whisky. The yellow dwarf was an independent man, for he had made lucky "hits," and had a "dreaming" mother.

Peleg Ferret picked his path across the muddy outdoor space that intervened between the extremity of the entry, on which was situated the dwarf's room, and a narrow rear portion of the building, occupied principally by organ-grinders and other foreign vagrants, and forming one side of an angular court, bordered by two alleys that conducted into an inner area dwelt in by rag-pickers and bone-gatherers. Ascending the stairs, of familiar gloom and filthiness, the agent reached a landing, the narrow window of which overlooked a collection of wooden huts, with mounds of bones in front, and thousands of parti-colored rags fluttering over their roofs and porches. At the bases of the bone-hills dozens of hungry-looking dogs were stretched at length, gnawing the more savory frag-

ments, and occasionally howling in horrible concert. Under a pine shed were piled several bales of washed rags, roped and secured, in readiness for market, and near the aperture of an alley leading out to the street stood a small handcart, whereto a brace of dogs was harnessed, and from which an old woman was unloading the product of her morning's tour, in the shape of wet or frozen rags, bones, shreds of paper, sticks of wood, and a variety of cast-away rubbish, raked from the streets—"unconsidered trifles," in the eye of the world, but to the chiffonnier the means of existence, and often the foundation of fortune.

Ferret paused not, however, to observe, save by a passing glance, the motley appearance of this rag-pickers' domain, but proceeded, according to the direction that he had received from the dwarf, to a room into which the reader has been already introduced, as that of Monna Maria and her Italian family.

Early as it was in the forenoon, all the active men and most of the children belonging to the establishment had long since emerged upon the streets, dispersing to their several itinerancies. The superannuated greybeard remained, however, sitting on his block, and drivelling over his beads, and the mother of the household, with the younger women, was engaged in various manipulations. Monna Maria—her forbidding face bent down—was busied in knitting, and scarcely raised her eyes, when the visitor, after waiting for the door to be opened to his knock, walked into the apartment, and began to survey the group with his crafty glance.

Peleg Ferret was accustomed, like Jobson of Foley's

Barracks, "to do with all sorts o' tenants;" nevertheless, the indifference with which his advent was regarded rather abashed his customary self-possession. For a minute or two he remained standing in the middle of the floor, his gaze passing from the dotard, with his rosary, to the old woman, and then scanning the other females, who had silently resumed their employments. At length he asked, in a tone that was intended to be conciliatory, if "all the folks were at home," to which sapient interrogatory the Italians made no answer whatever.

"Well, if ye hain't got tongues, or don't understand English, I'm sort o' blocked," muttered the agent to himself; but at this moment the old woman raised her eyes, and inquired, in tolerably intelligent language, concerning his business in their apartment.

"You can talk, can you?" ejaculated Ferret. "Well, now, that's clever, anyhow. S'posin' I ask you, if you ever knew a rag-pickin' old critter called Old Pris?"

"What would you know about the dead?" demanded Monna Maria, in a measured voice, while her eyes darted a searching glance, as she leaned partially forward, pausing in her task.

Ferret hesitated a moment, and then said—

"I'd like to find some of her friends."——

"She had no friends," was the chilling response.

"Well, somebody that knowed her—somebody that knowed about her and the child she stole—and about the pawn-tickets she had—that's all."

The agent uttered these words slowly, keeping his eyes fixed upon the woman's face; and he saw, at once, that

she was startled with their abrupt meaning; for her glance fell before his, and her frame apparently trembled. But, whatever might be her emotion, the Italian concealed it instantly, and rejoined—

"Why come you here to ask such questions? What know I about your lost children and pawn-tickets? Have I stolen from you?"

"Well," drawled the crafty agent, perceiving, at once, that the woman was desirous of eluding his scrutiny, and that, whatever she might know concerning the object of his search, she was, for some reason, evidently unwilling to disclose it—"Well, ma'am, no offence, I hope—only there's a large reward offered to find out something about the child that Old Pris stole away, and they said you knew somethin' about the critter. It 'ud be wu'th your while, ma'am, if ye did—that's a fact."

"There was a boy stolen?" inquired the Italian, nodding her head.

"A boy—well, it might be a boy," returned Peleg. "Did you know about a boy?"

"The child of a heretic," went on the woman, in an evasive manner. "All heretics are damned, and their children with them."

"That's comfortable," remarked Ferret. "Nice—don't you think?"

"What do you come here for?" suddenly exclaimed Monna Maria, dropping her knitting needles. "If a heretic lost his child, the child was saved from perdition."

"That's your opinion, is it?" said Ferret, who began to conjecture that the Italian was either deranged, or endea-

voring to mislead him by assuming to wander in her mind. "Now, I'd like to have you explain what you mean by a heretic?"

"It is he who forsakes the True Church," answered Monna Maria.

"That's the Roman Church—hain't it?" asked Ferret. "Well, is a Jew a heretic?"

"Accursed!" exclaimed Monna Maria.

"And a Protestant, too, I s'pose?"

"There is no hope for either, or for their children," cried the woman, vehemently, as she rose suddenly, and stood with her gaunt figure erect before Ferret, her long arms extended, as if to thrust him away. But as she made this movement, something that fell from her bosom to the floor caught the agent's quick eye, and, stooping immediately, he possessed himself of it. A single glance discovered to him that it was a pawn-ticket, and he instantly divined a connection of this scrap of paper with the deceased rag-picker, perhaps with the living child that had been stolen.

Monna Maria's aspect became wilder, as she beheld the ticket in her visitor's hand. Stamping her foot upon the floor, she attempted to clutch Ferret's arm, and failing in that, demanded fiercely that what she had dropped should be restored to her. But Ferret, familiar with such demonstrations on the part of females, and perceiving that, in pursuit of his quest, he had now gained an important clue, adroitly avoided the woman's hands, while he thrust the scrap of paper into his pocket.

"You can have this 'ere ticket, ma'am, after a certain

person has seen it, an' if any damage is done, I'm responsible—d'ye hear?" said the agent, quietly. "So jes' stop your caterwaulin', if you please."

But the Italian virago was not one to be intimidated by Ferret's coolness. No sooner did she lose sight of the pawn-ticket, as it was transferred to her visitor's pocket, than, with a shrill, cat-like cry, she turned suddenly towards a shelf, and took from it a long, sharp-bladed knife, or stiletto. Then, while the agent was speaking, she glided quickly past him, her black eyes fixed upon his, and, before he was aware of her intention, stood, brandishing the weapon, between himself and the door, as if defying his egress without a deadly struggle.

This change of incident was quite unlooked-for on the part of the somewhat timid, though unscrupulous, collector of Mordecai Kolephat's rents. To be tongue-lashed by Xantippean tenants, had generally afforded him a piquant passage-at-arms, in which his own Billingsgate vocabulary was usually more than enough to silence any adversary; nay, to be occasionally grappled by a bellicose Amazon somewhat the worse for liquor, had never caused flinching on the part of the truculent agent—inasmuch as a backhanded blow or straightforward kick was, in most cases, as in his interview with Mrs. Keeley, sufficient to settle all female opposition; but in the present instance, when a gaunt and powerful Italian hag, armed with a keen dagger, disputed his right of way, while two others, with darkening countenances, seemed ready to rush to her assistance, it is not to be wondered at if Peleg Ferret grew somewhat nervous, and, in view of all the circum-

stances, appeared rather more inclined to parley than to fight. He stood irresolute a moment, with foot advanced, and one hand rubbing his smoothly-shaved chin—then, in a tone of much more suavity than he had previously seen fit to use, remarked—

"You're goin' agin the law, and can be put in prison—don't you know that?"

The woman, in reply, only made an impatient gesture, signifying a demand for the restoration of her property.

"What good is a pawn-ticket?" pursued Peleg. "'Tain't no family jewel, I reckon. What do you consider such a piece o' paper wu'th? I'm willin' to pay you anything reasonable. That's fair—ain't it? Come, you and I can settle it, I guess."

But no audible response to these cajoling words came from the gloomy Italian woman, whose bright eyes wandered not from his own, and who pointed the stiletto downward, as though indicating the place where Ferret had deposited the ticket. Peleg began to feel really uncomfortable, under the regards of those glittering eyes, that were triplicated by the orbs of two other quite as fierce-looking females. He thrust one hand into his pocket, and began to fumble for the scrap of paper that he had feloniously appropriated; for the unpleasant thought occurred to him, that however autocratic he might be in his own domain of Kolephat College, he was here, in a strange tenant-house, of very little account at all, and far more liable to receive a fatal thrust from a well-driven dagger, than if, instead of being Peleg Ferret, he was simply some vagabondizing organ-grinder, or other

garlic-scented foreigner, to whom stiletto-playing was natural as eating maccaroni. He was on the point, therefore, after a few reflections like this, of drawing out the pawn-ticket, for the purpose of restoration, when a low knock startled both himself and the Italian woman, and the next instant the door was lightly opened, and an astonishing presence became suddenly visible, within the threshold, and just behind his armed antagonist.

Well might Peleg Ferret, coarse-grained and flinty-souled though he was, look with wonder at the vision of loveliness disclosed to his gaze. A child of ten years, graceful and symmetric as a fawn, with face of surprising beauty—dark, lustrous eyes, rosy lips, forehead low and broad, and covered with clustering curls that hung thickly over her dazzling neck and shoulders ; her figure clothed, or rather draped, with a short, semi-transparent gauze robe, bedizened with spangles and brilliants of paste, her clear-veined bosom half-exposed, as well as her lower limbs, below the tunic edges, which were clad in flesh-colored stockings, while the small and exquisitely shaped feet below were cased in white satin slippers, clasped by glittering buckles—such was the strange but radiant object that lightened, as it were, within the dusky tenant-room, making it, all at once, redolent of fairy land.

The agent drew back an instant, almost frightened at the apparition, but a second glance revealed to his practised eye the meretricious character of what he beheld. There were beauty and grace before him, it was true, and sparkling, buoyant childhood. A light, ringing laugh, melodious as a bird-song, broke, moreover, from the

parted lips of the young maid; but Peleg saw upon her form the tawdry trappings of a cheap theatre, the gewgaws and finery of some humble stage; for he, shrewd agent, and experienced collector of rents, had often encountered in bar-rooms and garrets the coryphees and ballet-nymphs of scenic life — encountered them, poor wretches! on his weekly rounds, receiving from their thin, cold hands, as they shivered in fireless rooms, the hard-earned dollar of rent, wrung from the miserable wages of their nightly exposures on the unhealthy boards of theatres. Speedily, therefore, as his cold glance fell upon the gauze-robed vision, the transient charm of her luminous entry faded from his mind, and he beheld a lovely child, it is true, but only a child of the foot-lights, of the tenant-house, of the streets.

And the little one herself paused, faltered, and shrank back, beneath the narrow, crafty look of the strange man in Monna Maria's apartment. Poor child! it was evident that, in her low knock, and sudden appearance, she had sought, in the innocent merriment of her heart, to cause a little surprise to her Italian friends; for it was Ninetta, the youthful danseuse, who, on her way to a morning rehearsal, clad in her poor finery, had taken off at the door a thick cloak that sheltered her, and removed the thick, long boots in which her small feet had been hidden, in order to enter at once, like a fairy just evoked, thus pleasantly to greet the youngsters whom she expected were within, and, perhaps, to call a smile to Monna Maria's morose countenance. Poor child, indeed! trembling and ready to burst into tears, she stood, a moment,

while the door remained ajar, and then, slowly retreating, caught up her thick cloak and boots, that she had let fall outside the threshold, and hastily throwing the former over her shoulders, bounded past the Italian woman and her strange visitor, and sank sobbing in a corner of the room, between the two young women, who immediately flew to her.

Peleg Ferret, meantime, had not been idle. His cunning eye, while it measured the dancing girl, her beauty, and the fustian which covered it, watched, at the same time, the movements of his adversary, whose attention, attracted momentarily by Ninetta's appearance, was the next instant diverted by the child's rapid transit across the floor. In that instant, the agent sprang forward, struck a violent blow upon Monna Maria's uplifted arm, and then, stooping to avoid any missile, darted along the dark passageway, and down the steep staircase, at a speed which presently bore him out of reach of pursuit, and safe upon the street pavement in front of the tenant-house. Arrived there, he walked leisurely, drawing from his pocket the pawnbroker's ticket that he had been so near relinquishing to the Italian Amazon.

It was of the common stamp of duplicates, two or three figures designating its number in a multitude of pledges; and when Mordecai Kolephat examined it sharply afterwards, when listening to Ferret's account of his search, the old man shook his head doubtfully. Nevertheless, it was a clue, and he lost no time in accompanying his agent to the dingy shop of the money-lender whose receipt it purported to be: a memorial-place of shattered fortunes,

ruined hopes, despairing efforts, in the guise of many a cherished relic of the past, piled together upon dusty shelves, or thrust out of sight in recesses of gloomy drawers. But the date of the ticket was remote, and no satisfactory information could be obtained respecting that which it purported to represent. The trinket might have long since been sold, was the pawnbroker's opinion ; could have been of little value, from the fact that but a few shillings had been loaned upon it. It might or might not be among the accumulated rubbish of years ; but, to oblige the respected Mr. Kolephat, his books would be ransacked, and, if possible, the article should be traced. So the rich man left the money-lender's door, surmounted by triple-balls, no wiser than he came, but with bowed head and dejected air.

Peleg Ferret, however, did not seem to be discouraged ; but Peleg was a shrewd business-man, and well knew his own interest. He had evinced commendable zeal, in obtaining even so slight a memorial of Old Pris as the duplicate was believed to be, and knew, consequently, that this fact would go deeply to his credit in the old man's memory. But the collector did not disclose to Kolephat the conjectures that possessed his own mind, linking the dancing-child whom he had seen for a moment in Monna Maria's apartment with the Hebrew's long-lost daughter. He had not even adverted to his meeting with the beautiful child, because, as a faithful agent, he knew the value of caution, and resolved to nurse, as it were, his present relations with Mordecai, the better to secure his own interest, when success should reward his perseverance

in the search. With this view, therefore, he preserved strict silence regarding his intentions, only assuring the melancholy old man that he should be unrelaxing in the task committed to his care; to which the Jew, with broken voice, replied, in parting from him—

"Ferret, I confide in you! Leave no stone unturned, and you shall be—richly rewarded!"

"I'll take care o' that," muttered the agent to himself, as he turned away. "Whatever is found out must be found out by me! Leave me alone for takin' care of No. 1."

And, pleased with this estimate of himself, Peleg Ferret resolved upon making himself further acquainted with the theatrical protége of Monna Maria, the Italian.

Chapter XXVI.

The Inventor's Wife.

WHEN Mr. Jobson, the benevolent broker, diverged from the side of Emily Marvin, his feelings of disappointment at the orphan's decided rejection of his liberal offers of protection, found vent in sundry tossings of the head and smackings of the lips, as though he would have given utterance to—"Ha, ha! we shall see!"—"Pride and poverty!" and the like objurgatory sentences. At the same time, an expression of no very gentle character dwelt on the features of the man of business, gradually deepening and darkening, as he hurried along, into a facial gloom of the most threatening description; and it was with this countenance, betokening no charitable mood within, that he turned abruptly, at the corner of a block in the next street, and penetrating a few steps into an alley-way, stopped before the door of a small wooden house, and thereat knocked with a most portentous violence. It was immediately opened by a man, who, upon seeing his visitor, shrunk mechanically backward.

"Aha, Dobbs! I've caught you—have I? You'd like to have been out, eh? But I'm too smart for you, you know, Dobbs, my good fellow."

Saying this, and with a malicious grin, Mr. Jobson pushed forward, backing the unresisting Dobbs into a little entry-way, and thence into an apartment plainly furnished, and having a cheap cotton curtain drawn across one side, as if to conceal some bed or recess. A female child, who had apparently been reading, sat with a book upon her lap, near a small table, on which a candle was burning, and, in a corner behind the stove, a woman reclined in a rocking-chair.

"Go in, Dobbs—go in, I say!" exclaimed Jobson, as his portly person pressed against the little man. "Comfortable you have it here! Where's that brother of yours—heh, Dobbs—the crazy fellow, you know?"

All this time, the proprietor of the humble dwelling had been pushed forward into the middle of the room, without venturing a word of reply to the broker, whose overbearing manner appeared to deprive him of all resolution; and now he silently dusted a chair, and handed it to Jobson, who seated himself in it with a crash, and drawing out his handkerchief, snorted loudly, and then pursing his lips, commenced, with elevated head, a survey of the apartment and its inmates.

"My brother is—in his room," hesitated Dobbs.

"Aha! got a room to himself—heh? What's the crazy man doing?—writing his book, I s'pose, Dobbs!"

"Walter is engaged, as usual," said Dobbs, apologetically; "but" ——

"Oh, yes!—always a 'but,' you know, Dobbs! If it wasn't for 'buts,' your good-for-nothing gim-cracks might have made your fortune before this. But"—and

here the broker paused, and fixed his eyes upon the inventor, whose cheek grew pale—"But, my fine fellow, *I* want to know where's the eighty or ninety dollars *you* owe *me* to come from? That's the 'but' I'd like to have answered."

Mr. Jobson threw his right leg over his left, and began to nurse it, while he elevated his chin to an angle, and contracted his brows. Dobbs seemed to be incapable of replying, but a voice from the corner here interposed suddenly.

"Hubert! ask him to lend you the money at a hundred per cent. interest," said this voice, in a quavering tone that indicated weakness, while, at the same time, it was dry and caustic. Jobson turned suddenly towards the stove.

"Aha!" ne exclaimed, "so that's your drunken wife that I've heard of! A sharp tongue's in the jade's head, anyhow. I pity you, Dobbs—'pon my word, I do." The broker gave way to a chuckle, which was manifestly forced.

"Pity him!" echoed the woman, who now rose suddenly from her seat, and advanced towards the agent, in spite of her husband's efforts to seize her hand and restrain her. "Let me alone, Hubert! I'm not drunk *now!*" she cried, stepping before the inventor, and placing herself directly opposite Jobson, who grasped his gold-headed cane, as if apprehensive of an assault. "Pity him!—and well you may! you, who scrape dollars together, and pass your days and nights in scheming to defraud and oppress your fellow men! You may well

pity and despise the wretched husband of a worthless wife !"

The woman dashed her hand to her forehead, as she uttered these words, as if to cover the burning tears that gushed from her inflamed eyes.

"Oh, Maria ! Maria ! do not talk so !" exclaimed her husband. "It is not your fault ! You are not worthless ! I ought never to have brought you to poverty by my folly—my folly !"

Dobbs tried to take his wife's hand, as he said this, but she waved him back.

"Hubert ! leave me alone ! This man has come here to insult us because you have the misfortune to be in his debt ! He has heard the truth concerning *me*—that I am drunken, worthless—a disgrace to you and to my child !" ——

"Oh, no ! no, Maria !" cried the poor husband, lifting his hands in supplication.

"I say, he has heard the truth !" went on the woman, with strange composure. "And he comes here to insult, to tread upon us, in our poverty and shame. Is it not so ?" she demanded, fiercely, of Jobson, with a step nearer to him, as she spoke.

"I—I want my money," replied the broker, quailing, in spite of himself, before the determined bearing of the woman whom he had exasperated. "I ask nothing but my due !"

"Yes ! your due !" repeated the female, scornfully. "You found my poor, but honest, sensitively honest husband, struggling, as none but he has ever struggled, to

overcome reverses, and obtain a livelihood. You leased him this little hut, exacting an exorbitant rent, and when, in the effort to perfect his inventions, he found himself cramped for means, you were pleased to take a mortgage on machinery worth ten times the paltry debt which he had contracted."——

"And where's my security?—what have I to show for my money?" interrupted the agent.

"What has he to show for years of patient labor?—for months of privation?" cried the woman. "The fire that destroyed your security, left him likewise a ruined man—his shop, his machinery, his models—all gone!"

"Too true! too true!" murmured Dobbs, who had retreated behind the stove, listening with trepidation to his wife's defiant rehearsal of his transactions with Jobson.

"I've got nothing to do with your husband's misfortunes," rejoined the broker, in a blustering tone. "If he's a mind to be a fool, its his own look-out! I didn't saddle troubles on him! All I want is my own, and that I'll have, you know, ma'am—that I'll have."

"And I'll pay, Mr. Jobson!" ejaculated Dobbs. "Every cent—if you'll only give a little time. It's all I ask."

"Yes—time!" sneered the agent. "And my rent runnin' on! I tell you what, Dobbs, your family is entirely too expensive for me. Two things are enough to make a man poor, you know—a crazy brother, and a" ——

Jobson laughed sardonically, and rapped the floor with his cane.

"'Drunken wife,' you were about to say, Mr. Jobson,"

cried the woman, quickly. "Speak openly, sir; it is the truth!"

"Well, drunken wife, if you wish, ma'am," returned the broker, maliciously.

At this moment, the curtain that hung near the wall was violently agitated, and presently fell, detached from the cord by which it was suspended, disclosing an extended arm and hand, and the face of a man of about thirty years of age, who lay extended on a settee, and propped up by pillows. This man was dark in complexion, with strongly defined lineaments, a profusion of black, curling hair, and heavy beard of the same color. His cheeks were lank and sallow, as from disease, and his eyes sunken, but, at the present time, seemed to burn with excitement, as they were directed full upon the broker's countenance.

The unlooked-for apparition, so ghostly, yet threatening, had the effect of disturbing Mr. Jobson's equanimity, more than had all the denunciations of his debtor's wife. The color retreated from his plethoric cheeks, and he instinctively moved his chair backward But Mrs. Hubert Dobbs raised her hand, as if to calm the invalid's emotion, while her husband stole away from his corner, clasping with one hand the young child, who had crept near her father during the scene, and was looking anxiously up into his troubled face.

"Well, sir!" said the woman, pointing to the agitated stranger on the settee, "you have sneered at and insulted your poor debtor before one who knows him not—you have called me a drunken wife, which is, as I said, the

truth! for I came home here, last night, to my husband and child, brutally intoxicated and helpless!—as I have done a hundred times before. Now, hear me, you who have branded me, and you, Hubert, my abused and patient husband—and you, sir," she added, turning to the invalid, "whoever you are, whom his kindness shelters! hear what I have now to say! Alice, bring me that book." ——

The child left her father's side, and approaching her mother timidly, handed her the volume that she had been reading and still retained in her hand. It was a small Bible, which the woman, as she received it, raised to her lips, and then, sinking suddenly upon her knees, pressed it convulsively to her bosom.

"Hear me, Father of Heaven!" she exclaimed, raising her hands as they clasped the book. "Be witness, I pray Thee, to my sorrow and repentance for the past, as I now promise, with thy help, never to let a drop of intoxicating drink pass these lips of mine! O God! I pray thee to assist me in keeping this sacred pledge!"

For an instant, there was utter silence in the room. Even Jobson, cold and calculating as he was, seemed momentarily impressed with the solemn intensity of the woman's pledge—the deep contrition that was apparent in her words and action. Then, all at once, as if it were an effort for breath, a sobbing sound burst from the husband's bosom, echoed by his child's cry of irrepressible joy. But the sob was not one of sorrow—it was the glad, overpowering expression of his thankful heart, as the poor man sprang forward, and clasped his wife to his heart, regardless of his hard creditor—thoughtless of

aught save her who had spoken these blessed words—he folded in his arms a new love—a spirit disenthralled—the bride of his youth, the redeemed mother of his child.

Mr. Jobson, real estate broker and agent, felt decidedly *de trop.* He drew his portly form, bolt upright in the chair, and glanced, with determined contempt, around. Before him, he beheld the group of father, mother, and child, weeping in each other's arms ; he glanced at the settee, and saw that its occupant had covered his face with his hands, and turned to the wall ; he heard a step behind, and looking, discovered the inventor's brother, Walter, who had emerged from his little study, and, like a crazy man as he was, was kneeling in the middle of the floor, uplifting hands and eyes as if in thanksgiving. Mr. Jobson rubbed his chin, grasped his gold-headed cane, and rose abruptly, with his back to all of them.

"Stay, sir !" said a deep voice ; and the broker felt that the bright dark eyes of the stranger on the settee were fixed upon him. "I have a something—to say—to you."

The words were uttered slowly, as though with difficulty. Jobson turned his face in the direction of the voice, but not sufficiently to interrupt the invalid's glance.

"Well !" he exclaimed, impatiently, "what do *you* want."

"You will give this gentleman—Mr. Dobbs—a receipt, in full, for—your claim."

"I'll do no such thing !" began Jobson ; but paused immediately, as he beheld the stranger thrust his hand beneath the bed-clothes, and draw out a belt, which his

quick eye saw was of the description wherein money is carried.

"My good friend," said the invalid, "in that belt—there is money. Let the fellow be paid !"

The order was given in a deep, though trembling voice, as the stranger let his belt drop beside the settee, and then sank backward on the pillow, apparently exhausted. Walter was by his side in a moment, supporting his head, while he applied a phial of salts to his nostrils ; for the excitement in his weakened state, had caused the invalid to faint. Hubert, obeying the stranger's words, lifted the money-belt, which was heavy with gold ; but, as he opened it, he heard a mild voice at his side remark—

"Oh, don't trouble yourself now, Dobbs, my dear friend ! Call down at my office, at your leisure, you know ! I won't interrupt you at this moment, Dobbs—you must be quite happy, you know ! Mrs. Dobbs, and all of you ! Good-day, Mr. Dobbs. Any time, you know ; we can settle this little matter at my office, you know."

Saying these words, and with the most placid smile imaginable, Mr. Jobson, the broker, dusted his pantaloons with his handkerchief, smoothed his hat, and then, with a bow that included Mr. and Mrs. Dobbs, the little girl, crazy Walter, and the fainting man on the settee, gracefully backed himself out of the room, and with gold-headed cane and patent-leather boots, speedily departed from the premises, while the now happy family turned their united attention to restoring to animation the generous stranger whose gratitude had interposed for their salvation.

Chapter XXVII.

The Ruined Gamester.

"IS this true, that you tell me?—a child—a daughter still living?"

These words were spoken by Charles Richmond to the niece of Mordecai Kolephat, as they sat together in the saloon which was their usual place of meeting. The man's eyes were fixed upon the face of Rebecca, with a gaze of singular intensity, beneath which the young girl almost trembled.

"I overheard my uncle relating all that I have told you, Charles, and, indeed, it frightened me nearly to death."

"It may be a fraud, Rebecca—an effort to extort money."

"Oh, no, indeed. Uncle has changed so much within a few days. He wanders up and down the house continually, and scarcely ever speaks to me. It's true—it's all true, Charles; and that child, I know, will be found—probably a beggar-girl, or something of the kind! Isn't it dreadful?"

"And your uncle is rejoiced greatly, no doubt," said Richmond, shading his eyes, as he looked earnestly at his

companion. "And you?—is my sweet Rebecca to give way for some coarse, low-bred girl?"

"I'm almost crazy about it. If it were not that you love me, I should die with vexation. Dear Charles! I thought I should be so happy in having uncle's property—not for myself, really—no, indeed, but for *you*—indeed, Charles, I" ——

The lover remained silent. He was absorbed in thought, and the low, passionate tones of Rebecca's voice appeared to fall unheeded on his ear. It might be that a shadow of what was to come fell across the girl's soul, as she noticed his abstracted manner, for a sudden sigh agitated her breast, and she paused irresolutely. Nevertheless, whatever might be Richmond's reflections, he was too much an adept in dissimulation to permit his countenance to reveal them. He presently resumed the conversation, in the light phrases of flattery and adulation which were as music to the fond girl's ears, and thus the interview passed, as many previous ones had, till the time for parting came, and Rebecca hurried homeward, more than ever a slave to the wiles of one who counterfeited all that she, poor self-deceived, too deeply felt. Richmond left her, a few squares from her uncle's residence, with his usual well-dissembled reluctance; but, as he walked hurriedly away, a frown dark as night gathered upon his forehead, and the muscles of his full lip twitched convulsively.

"Curses!" he muttered, "have I played the fool with this school-girl to no purpose, after all? A lost child!—to rob me of the prize so nearly within my reach?"

He clenched his white teeth, and turning abruptly from

the thoroughfare which he was traversing, entered an intersecting street, and ascended the steps of a house that formed one of an elegant block. At a quick pull of the bell-wire, the door was opened by a negro in livery, who, bowing deferentially, ushered him to the interior. Apparently, Richmond was no stranger in the house, for he at once passed into a richly-furnished parlor, and thence to a rear apartment, in which were several well-dressed men grouped around a table, that they concealed from view, while others lounged upon velvet couches, in various attitudes. Upon a marble table in one corner stood various liquors, in decanters of finely-cut glass. Though it was mid-day without, the room was lit with gas, streaming from a magnificent chandelier, and the windows were draped with heavy curtains. Richmond nodded, as he entered, to several whom he seemed to recognize, and then, pausing at the table, lifted a glass, which was at once filled with brandy by an obsequious waiter who stood in attendance.

"Do you not play to-day, Richmond?" asked a young man, approaching him, as he threw himself upon a sofa, after quaffing the undiluted liquor.

"I may—presently," he answered, absently. Then, as if rousing himself, he said—"Have you luck?

"Indifferent," returned the young man. "The play has been deep all day, and I have ventured nothing of consequence."

Richmond rose, and, with the other, approached the group who surrounded the faro-table—men whom he knew well, as they moved in the same circles with himself—

youths with beards of scarce a year's growth, and old grey-haired men—but all more or less haggard, and with nerves overstrung by the excitement of gaming. Only one man at the table appeared to be unperturbed, and that was the dealer of cards, whose countenance was wholly expressionless in the light that fell from the gas jets above him.

Richmond and his companion watched the changing game for several minutes before either of them designated a card, and then both staked largely, and both won. "We are in the vein, perhaps," said the former, and they went on, winning still, and became mingled and undistinguishable in the gambling coterie, who thronged about the bank, under the sickly, artificial light that revealed their set features, and disclosed, at times, what they would fain conceal—the demoniac manifestations of avarice and greed, of exultation, rage, and disappointment, of fear, and often of despair.

The game went on in that quiet luxurious room—the game in which souls were played for, even as in the life-game of the world without. It was no new thing to Richmond. Thither, during years, had he come, in day and in night, to yield to that deadly fascination which, by slow but sure degrees, had brought him to the verge of ruin. It was no new thing; but on this day he was, as gamesters, in their superstition, term it, "in luck," and resolved to tempt Fortune to her utmost. So the hours wore away, and the play went on heavily, until Charles Richmond, who had entered the house nearly a ruined spendthrift, found himself the possessor of many thousands.

Many new faces took the place of others around that faro-table, as the hours fled silently, but Charles Richmond, infatuated with his fortune, continued his play, until, at length, there came a reverse, and he began to lose as heavily as he had won. The uncertain goddess who presides over the destinies of the gamester seemed suddenly to have withdrawn her smiles, and the heaps of counters that had accumulated to his credit, diminished speedily as they had swollen. With his changing fortune, Richmond's infatuation seemed to increase. Though a practised gamester, a fiendish excitement grew upon him, as again and again he flung his stakes upon the losing cards. He spoke not, save to indicate, at times, his bet, and then his voice was hoarse and broken ; but ever and anon he beckoned to the servant for the strong drink, which was as fuel to his appetite for play. Many there were, among the lookers-on, who had often seen Richmond win and lose before, but always with the placid smile of one who could preserve to himself the advantage of calmness ; but these observers now exchanged meaning glances, perhaps of pity, but far likelier of satisfaction ; for the bank had won largely of them all, and misfortune courts fellowship. Thus passed the day, though, in that strange room, day and night were unknown, save by the strokes of a bronze clock, upon a bracket, regularly chronicling the hours during which fortunes changed their owners, and peace vanished from many a bosom that was henceforth to harbor only unquiet.

But all things must have a term ; and at last the pallid features of Charles Richmond waxed haggard and unna-

tural, his lips quivered, as every card was turned, and he more frequently lifted to his mouth the replenished goblet of brandy. Therefore, none were surprised when, as the relentless dealer swept a tall pile of his crimson counters to the ever winning bank, the gamester suddenly dashed his hand to his brow, and muttered in a hollow tone, "I'll play no more ;" then turned, and, staggering, would have fallen to the floor, had not his relaxed frame been suddenly upheld by a young man who had been for some time regarding him intently.

"Peyton !" gasped the gamester, as he recognized his supporter, who at once assisted him to a sofa. "Peyton, I am ruined !" Then, overcome by the effect of his reckless potations, he sank back unconscious.

"I looked for this," said the young man, in a low voice, as if addressing himself. "This, Helen, is your husband !"

There was no exultation in the feeling with which the spendthrift Peyton regarded the rival for whom his love, years before, had been rejected by Helen Ellwood. Indeed, as he had watched the desperate gamester during the last hour, the young man's reflections had partaken more of sorrow and pity for the poor wife than of satisfaction in speculating upon the husband's impending ruin. He had long known of Richmond's excesses at play, but little dreamed he, even now, that the man before him was not only himself impoverished, but that he had beggared the woman who had bestowed her fortune and her love upon one so unworthy of either.

"You must leave this place," said Peyton, when, after

an interval, the gamester had somewhat recovered; and, sustaining the wretched man, who, in the passiveness of helpless intoxication, submitted to his control, he called one of the lackeys to his assistance, and together they supported Richmond to a carriage at the door, which he then entered himself, ordering the driver to convey them to that home where, his heart told him, their arrival would bring sorrow and shame to the one who had been once too dear to him.

It was near midnight when the coach reached Mrs. Richmond's mansion, and to the quick summons a man-servant opened the door. Peyton had hoped that, at so late an hour, the wife would have retired; but Helen, anxious and alarmed, appeared upon the staircase, as her intoxicated husband was borne into the hall. The light from a chandelier fell upon his pale features, his disordered hair, his sinking frame, and to the poor lady's apprehensions, some calamity at once was presented. She saw not her former suitor—saw nothing but the one drooping form of her husband, as, flying down the stairs, she flung herself upon his bosom, crying—"Charles! beloved Charles!"

Peyton stood beside her, as she clung to the ruined gamester, sinking on her knees beside his helpless frame, which the servant supported. He smiled bitterly, and said—

"Mrs. Richmond, compose yourself! Your husband is not bodily injured; but he had better be removed to bed."

Helen had discovered, ere her ancient lover spoke, that

a too usual malady affected the miserable man, who had now fallen insensible at her feet. A quick flush of shame crimsoned her face, and her voice trembled, in replying—

"Mr. Peyton, pardon me! I thank you for your attention to Charles. "And you will"—she hesitated. "It is so terrible a thing to be known," she added.

Peyton divined at once all the wife would have said—her anxiety lest the world should hear of Richmond's errors. He took the hand which she extended to him, half-lifted it to his lips, and then, recollecting himself, said, hurriedly—

"I leave him in your care. Good-night, Mrs. Richmond."

Helen answered by a mute look of gratitude, and then Peyton departed, with the memory of his old love in his heart, causing pity for the wife to struggle with indignation against the husband.

"Charles! beloved Charles! awake! speak to me!" murmured the wretched woman, as she stooped over her husband, who lay in a swoon upon the carpet, his head supported by the old servant, who endeavored to raise him. With difficulty, after summoning more assistance, Richmond was carried to his own apartment; but for a long time, after being laid upon the bed, he remained, as he had fallen, rigid and insensible, Helen bending over him with sobs and prayers. Once he seemed to revive, his breath came thickly, and a shiver ran through his limbs, but immediately afterwards the lethargy appeared deeper; till at length Helen, greatly alarmed, dispatched one of the servants for a physician, who, on arriving, at

once opened a vein, relieving the pressure of blood that seemed to threaten death. Richmond at last opened his eyes, but his wandering glances betokened that his mind was as disordered as his body.

"Some sudden and extreme excitement, added to stimulus, has induced this attack, which might, indeed, have been fatal," said the physician. "Has your husband's mind been agitated, of late, Mrs. Richmond?"

"Alas! he never confided aught to me," almost rose to Helen's lips; but she murmured only a negative to the doctor's question. "His health has appeared good," she added. "He has not complained."

"His physical health is good, to all appearance," responded Dr. C——, "but some strong mental agitation has brought on this paroxysm. He must be kept very quiet."

Richmond opened his eyes, and their glance flitted restlessly from Helen to the doctor and the servants, seemingly without recognition.

"Alas! he does not know me! Oh! this is dreadful!" exclaimed the wife, throwing herself upon her knees beside him. "Charles! dear Charles!"

"My dear madam, command yourself. He must be kept very still," said Dr. C——, in a sympathizing tone. Then, after a few requisite directions to the servant who attended, he took his leave. Helen, as the door closed behind him, sobbed heavily, and leaned her head upon her husband's breast.

Hours thus passed away, interrupted only by the entrance and withdrawal of the attendant, with Dr. C——'s

prescriptions ; but Helen still kept her place beside Richmond, watching his face, as he lay with closed eyes and lips parted, breathing heavily, and, it seemed, painfully ; for, at intervals, his respiration grew thick, and his throat was spasmodically contracted—at which times, the wife would bend wildly forward, crying—" Charles ! dear Charles !"

Richmond reclined on his back, his hands beside him, the fingers slightly clenched. Helen had twined one of her delicate arms about his neck, supporting his head, while the other rested lightly on his breast, and wiped away, anxiously, the heavy sweat that gathered on his forehead. The chandelier lights cast a subdued radiance through their shaded globes, a time-piece ticked slowly in the next apartment, and against the window-blinds pattered drops of rain, that had begun falling since midnight.

Suddenly Richmond started from the pillow, and uttered a sharp cry, his eyes opening, at the same time, in a wide stare. Helen threw her arms around him, but he wrestled violently, endeavoring to release himself.

" Charles ! my husband ! lie down ! do not excite yourself—you are ill, dear love !—let me implore you " ——

" Give me another chance ! I double the stakes ! I've won—I've won !"

" Charles ! husband !"

" Let the Jew take my bet—I'll play against him till midnight. Hah ! they say I murdered Helen !—it is a lie !"

It was pitiable to behold the brilliant Charles Richmond, tossing and struggling on his bed, as bewildered

fancies chased one another through his brain. Helen clung to his bosom, pressed her lips to his fevered brow, and strove, with tender words, to recall his wandering senses. But the frenzy, instead of diminishing, seemed to wax in power, till at length the man shook her roughly from him, and leaping from the bed, strode violently to and fro on the floor, beating his breast and forehead with clenched hands. The wife followed his footsteps, clasping momently his arm, unheeding the fury with which he repulsed her. Still she murmured, "Charles! beloved! it is Helen—it is your wife, who loves you better than all the world!"

"Give me my coat—my hat!—do you hear?" cried Richmond, abruptly, glancing, as he spoke, upon the old servant, who trembled, in witnessing his master's fierce derangement.

"Dear husband! lie down, lie down, I pray!" pleaded Helen; but the maniac laughed, and muttered—

"I'll have my revenge, this time! Rebecca! you—you shall be my fortune" ——

Rebecca! the name of a *woman*, breathed from her husband's lips, fell like ice upon Helen's heart; but she still clasped Richmond's arm, and prayed that he would lie down—that he would rest.

"For the love of Heaven, Charles, listen to your wife!"

"Wife!—I have no wife!" exclaimed the gamester. "She is dead—and now, sweet Rebecca! we can be married."

Again! that woman's name! Will Helen's heart bear all, and break not?" She pleaded still—

"Charles! you must not agitate yourself—O hear me!"

But Richmond, in his delirium, lifted his hand, and, ere the servant could rush forward to restrain him, struck the clinging woman twice upon her forehead, and she fell by his side upon the floor. Then, as the paroxysm gave way to weakness, he staggered, and fell back upon the bed.

Chapter XXVIII.

Scenes in Kolephat College.

MR. GRANBY was not one to forget his good intentions ; and the project of establishing a day-school, under Margaret Winston's care, in the very heart of that moral desert which was bounded by the confines of Kolephat College, occupied his thoughts constantly, from the hour of his conversation with the seamstress, until the morning, three days afterwards, when, accompanied by Samson and Rob Morrison, he found himself seated in an apartment of the tenant-house just converted into a school-room, by the introduction of a few deal benches and a low desk, with a black-board elevated behind it. There was but little room to spare in the place, after disposition of those articles ; for it was the miserable apartment that had been occupied by the mother of little Fanny, and in which that forsaken woman had perished in darkness and alone. But its more gloomy features were now concealed by a coat of whitewash on the walls, and some necessary ventilation had been procured by means of an aperture cut above the door, corresponding to a plate of perforated tin in the window. In this rude temple of letters, Mr. Granby

now filled a chair, near the desk, at which Margaret was seated, whilst Samson stood by the door, and a dozen children of tender ages, including Rob, Harry, and Fanny, were ranged upon the wooden benches.

The group of stranger urchins was motley enough, it must be said. Gathered from the alley without, and dingy entries within, they had been bribed by Samson, with pieces of bread, coaxed by Fanny and Harry, with childish argument, and lured not a little, at last, by the kind voice of Margaret, to trust themselves over the threshold of that untried bourne—a school-room. Clothed, or rather unclad, in habitual tatters, their hands begrimed with filth, eyes bleared, and hair matted, these little waifs of Kolephat College were aught but agreeable to a refined taste, and the odor of their old rags, when it became released by the heat of the stove, was anything but pleasant to the senses. Their faces, too, as they were turned in stupid wonder towards Margaret, exhibited little to attract love or sympathy; for, infants as they were, there could yet be noticed traits of vindictive passion, precocious cunning, and leering mischief, in the lineaments that were half concealed by indurated dirt. Nevertheless, to the eyes of Mr. Granby and his protégée, Margaret, the row of ragged children was full of deep interest, since, in their estimation, each individual in it was representative of diverse neglected classes of the human family. The weird-looking boy who sat upon the right, and who had yesterday stood at a street-crossing, sweeping the pavement, with a shrill cry of "Please, gi'me penny," to every passer-by—that urchin, with unkempt, tangled hair, face

prematurely old, and mouth distorted by an elfin grin—that infant outcast was, in their regard, a holy thing—for it was *human*, instinct with *life*, endued with a *soul*. It occupied, in their understanding, more space than the square of pine board which formed its seat; for it was an integer of creation, a tabernacle of spirit, a link in the chain of all immortal beings. And though, like the rest of its sordid companions, it rested uneasily immobile, shrinking, as it were, shamefaced, down to dust—like unto the lowest scale of God's creatures. Mr. Granby and Margaret felt that it was kindred even with them, and the former whispered, earnestly—

"These little ones are pleading with us to be made clean, to be fed, and to be clothed."

"And to be made angels!" answered Margery, softly, with a divine look radiating from her clear eyes.

"You are right, Miss Winston—they ask to be made angels, and we, as Christians, must answer their appeal. Truly, we, who are educated and refined, and who trust to be redeemed, have a mission confided to us, in behalf of these unfortunates. I have been thinking that they illustrate the parable of the talent which was given unto the faithful steward. They are as priceless jewels, indeed, placed in charge of Christians, and ought not to be hidden in dust under the world's feet; for our Lord will require usury for them at the last day. Look, Miss Winston! does not yonder infant *man* plead with us that he may be made useful?—does he not seem to ask that his limbs, his heart, his soul, shall be placed at interest for his Lord? In the name of his wretched class, in the name of Him

whose workmanship is degraded by his abasement, he pleads that we, as stewards of the Lord Christ, shall not leave him in the desert of the streets. Oh, Miss ! would not that shrivelled form and the shrunken soul it hides, covered with dust on the Judgment Day, be a terrible evidence of unfaithful stewardship, were our Master to say to one of us, 'Thou oughtest to have put my money to the *exchangers*, and then, at my coming, I should have received mine own with usury !'"

Margery was silent, but her expressive face responded to Mr. Granby's words, as she proceeded in the task of endeavoring to interest her untutored charge. In accomplishing this, the new teacher found valuable auxiliaries not only in her kind patron, but in Harry, and Fanny, and Rob Morrison. The latter, indeed, appeared to give himself entirely to the business—following Margaret's fingers, as they traced letters on the black-board, or listening eagerly to her explanations, with an interest that never flagged a moment. The other children grew, little by little, more accustomed to their novel position, and soon vied with one another in answering quickly such simple questions as the teacher asked ; so that, in the course of a few hours' session, Mr. Granby, with much satisfaction, felt that the Tenant-House School was an accomplished fact, and that Miss Winston was a teacher of whom he, as "Committee-man," might well be proud.

But it was still more satisfactory, at the close of the first morning of tuition—after a brief prayer had fallen upon the children's unaccustomed ears—to see the good Samson, with smiles breaking over all his features, raise

the lid of a covered basket, which he had concealed till then, and thence taking generous buttered cakes, of Mrs. George's own preparation, distribute them equitably among his ragged little clients, whose eyes danced with hungry delight. And it was more affecting than all to observe Margery weeping, as she sat holding Fanny and Harry by the hand a moment, and watching the poor little ones, as they awkwardly received their biscuits, and then stooping down, as they crept, one by one, to her knee, and kissing their thin faces, soiled and unhandsome as they were—kissing them with a smile and tear, and bidding them to be good, and come regularly to school.

"God bless you!" said Mr. Granby, warmly, after the children had quietly left the room, and then broken wildly down the stairs, eager to disperse to their separate domiciles, to tell parents, or such other poor protectors as they owned, the story of their new adventure. "God bless you, Miss Winston!"

"Dat he will—an' yourse'f, too, massa!" cried Samson, who held one handle of his basket, while Rob Morrison grasped the other.

Then, shaking Margery by the hand, the old gentleman, followed by his servant, descended to the front door of Kolephat College, but found his progress suddenly arrested by a throng of tenants who stood around the threshold, blocking up the narrow alley-way. These people seemed to be much excited, and were talking in a variety of idioms, among which the Irish brogue was most distinguishable.

"Bless me, Samson! what is the matter?" ejaculated

Mr. Granby, as he saw the crowd before him, which the negro was endeavoring to penetrate.

"Sure, it's a dead woman," answered a stout, broad-featured Irishwoman, who stood directly in the entrance, her naked arms blue from cold, and dripping, at the same time, with soap-suds. "Sure, it's that poor crathur, Mrs. Keeley, that's kilt an' murthered by the ould thafe o' the wor-r-ld, Ferret, bad cess to him."

"Murdered? what is that?—a woman murdered?" exclaimed Mr. Granby, greatly shocked. "Where are the police?"

"Sure, an' if it's not murthered, *what* is it?" cried the Hibernian female. "The black-hearted ould villyan tuk the poor sowl's bed from undher her, and" ——

"Where is she, my good woman—this person of whom you speak?"

"Is it her ye mane? Down there!—in the cellar!" answered the tenant, pointing to an opening, near the door, which was the entrance to certain subterranean depths, used formerly for the stabling of horses, but now as dwelling-places for the poorest of those wretched ones who swarmed about the dismal neighborhood. Mr. Granby found that the crowd made way for him, as, followed by Samson, he moved towards the cellar-mouth, beneath which were several decayed and water-soaked wooden steps, descending to a darkness like that of night. The old gentleman paused, for it scarcely seemed to him that a human being could exist in such a place as this appeared to be; but he heard, at this moment, a sound as of voices below, and Samson said—

"Massa Granby, please!—I'll go down dere fust."

So saying, the negro, leaving Rob Morrison in charge of the basket, bent his stalwart frame, and, stooping under the low cross-piece, let himself down to the damp and chilly abode, into which but a few day-beams struggled, scarcely discovering the figures of two or three men and women, who stood in the middle of the clay floor, looking solemnly upon a woman, who lay outstretched, with head thrown back, and eyes set in the last stare of death. There was not a particle of furniture in the cellar, and scarcely rags enough upon the corpse to cover nakedness. A few feet from the spot where it was extended, appeared a hillock of discolored snow, frozen hard, the remains of a heap that had gathered just under the single narrow window, level with the ground above, through which it had drifted during the previous week's storm. All the rest of the floor was hard clay, save in a depression near one corner, where a pool of dirty water had congealed to ice. But the most melancholy spectacle of all was the form of a child, lying prone over the dead woman's body, its small face pressed against the breast, its skeleton arms clasped about the neck. The negro, as he entered, and, after remaining a moment, became able to distinguish objects, shuddered, and gave utterance to an exclamation of horror.

Oh! Samson, it is exceedingly dark," said Mr. Granby, who was just behind him.

"Look! look at dat, massa!" responded the negro, directing the old gentleman's gaze to the object at their feet. Mr. Granby did look, and, like his servant, seemed

transfixed in dread surprise. But before either of them could make any further inquiries concerning what they saw, a shout arose above in the alley-way, and the next moment a man precipitated himself down the broken steps, and dashed into the cellar, a dozen of the tenants following closely. As the crowd entered, the darkness became for a moment opaque, and it was a minute before Mr. Granby was again enabled to discern aught near him. Then he heard a wild cry, and saw another form lying loose beside the dead woman.

"It's Keeley," said the voice of the Irish laundress, who was among those who had entered. "It's the poor body's husband!"

It was, indeed, the wretched Keeley, whom we last encountered in the beer-shop, calling for fiery draughts of brandy, to feed the unnatural thirst which consumed him, while his deserted wife was starving in the garret of Kolephat College. Driven to and fro by the demon of his appetite, the drunkard had wandered, during a week past, from grocery to bar-room, from one degraded resort to another, squandering the gold which he had stolen from Mallory, until at length, in his stupor, he had staggered near the cellar, and heard a single word that sobered him at once. And now, with fingers clutching his hair, and froth gathered upon his lip, he lay beside the corpse of his wife, and howled in the agony of unavailing remorse.

Then Mr. Granby heard, from the lips of those who stood irresolutely around, how the agent of the tenant-house, in the "strict" discharge of his duty, had evicted the woman from the miserable garret in which she was

dying; how she had been dragged away, with her child, and then returned, and crawled into this horrible cellar, and there lay down and died; how, finally, the screams of the orphan Moll had made known the fact to tenants above, and ——

Mr. Granby desired to listen no longer; for the rest was revealed at his feet. He gave orders to Samson to remain, and make such dispositions as were needful for the immediate relief of the child, while he himself hurriedly left the cellar, accompanied by Rob Morrison, whose hand he grasped tightly. But when he had proceeded a little way, he heard a sob at his side, and observed that the Weasel was weeping, though, when noticed, the boy brushed his eyes with the sleeve of his jacket, and turned away his head.

"Rob—Robert, my boy, what is the matter?" asked Mr. Granby, pausing in his walk. But the Weasel only sobbed the more.

"It was a sad thing," said Mr. Granby, supposing that his protégé was thinking of the scene just witnessed. Bob shook his head, and then murmured—

"Please, sir—Mr. Granby—don't be mad with me."

"What, my boy?" asked the old gentleman, much astonished at the boy's demeanor.

"'Cause—it made me cry. Folks all'ays said *I* was born in a cellar, too—an' mother died—same way." ——

The poor boy stopped, and vainly strove to check his grief.

"O Father in Heaven!" murmured Mr. Granby, to himself, as he felt a tear upon his own eyelid. "What

misery is in this world! Come, Rob," he continued, in a hurried tone, "let us go home."

"Please, sir, won't you take care o' that poor little girl?" asked the Weasel, as if suddenly summoning courage, and holding hard on Mr. Granby's hand. "She's a orphan, too!"

"That will I—that will I!" answered the old gentleman, and then drew Rob Morrison along, without saying more.

But when, at Mr. Granby's knock, good Mrs. George presented herself in the hall, she lifted her hands, in amazement, at beholding her patron and his young companion, with misty eyes and tear-drops rolling down their cheeks.

"They've been to that tenant-house school," thought the housekeeper to herself. Mrs. George judged aright; but she knew not that another orphan had been discovered—that another pupil for the tenant-house school was left by Death at the door of Charity.

Another, indeed; for already had Samson, in his thoughtfulness, coaxed the half-starved Moll away from her mother's cold form—the more easily because the wretched child shrank from the father who had been her tyrant—and conveyed her to the apartment of Margaret, whose kindness soon won the orphan's confidence. The negro then, after learning that Keeley, nearly crazy from the effects of his long debauch, had again reeled away from the cellar, directed his steps homeward, to acquaint his master with what he had done.

Meantime, the child Fanny, after leaving the schoolroom, had been sent by the seamstress, with a bowl of tea,

to the room of Mallory the Miser, who lay in his bed, propped upon the pillow, that had been smoothed as usual in the morning by Margaret's kind hands. On a round wooden stand near him stood a broken tumbler, half filled with water, and containing also the few withered flowers which Fanny had obtained from Emily Marvin, as a gift to the forlorn miser. The old man's eyes wandering constantly, still returned to rest upon those faded emblems of sweetness and beauty, and evermore his thin lips moved, murmuring broken soliloquies.

"'Tis good she is—the little child! to come to an ould man like me! It's not for my money *she* comes, anyhow, I'll go bail. I'd like, if I could afford, to give her—a bit of silver; but I'm too poor—I'm too poor!"

Thus babbled the aged miser to himself, as he watched a single cold gleam of sunshine that penetrated the casement, and sometimes trembled on the flowers in the broken glass. Presently, he listened intently, for a light step was at the door, and a moment afterwards, Fanny stole noiselessly in, and crept to the bed-side.

"Please, sir, Miss Margery sent you this—it's real nice!"

She presented, as she spoke, the tea, which Mallory received with a grim smile, taking hold of Fanny's hand.

"You're a good child," said he.

"Please, sir, Miss Margery is better than me," answered the girl. "Oh! I pray the Lord to make me as good as she is."

"The Lord—and what do you know about the Lord, omadhaun?" asked Mallory, with a curious smile.

"You're mighty young, to be sp'akin' of prayers, I'm thinkin'."

Fanny looked wonderingly at the sinister face of her questioner, and replied, seriously—

"The Lord Jesus was good, and gave me friends when my mother died; and I want to pray to him all the time, to thank him."

These simple words were spoken in so earnest a tone that Mallory remained silent, and an unusual feeling seemed manifest in his features, as if a dim consciousness of something wrong in his own nature were stirring in his mind; but the next moment, he relinquished Fanny's hand, and gave vent to a hard, dry laugh.

"Ye'd better go and pray, then, ye young saint," he said, sneeringly. "Maybe ye'll find a mare's nest. Good-bye to ye. Take your teacup with you."

Saying this, the miser handed Fanny the bowl, and closed his eyes. The child lingered a moment, to arrange the bed-clothes, as she had seen Margaret do, and then departed as quietly as she had come. Mallory, when he was alone again, opened his eyes, and muttered an imprecation. "Prayers!" he cried, nervously, turning on his pillow. "It's prayers an' priestcraft that makes the world as bad as it is. Bad luck to the" ——

Mallory paused, for his glance fell upon the broken tumbler, with its bunch of flowers, and the sunbeam glittering on the glass, painting transparent hues in its passage across the room. Queerly enough, as he looked, his memory recalled a beautiful story that he had heard, long ago, in his native land, of a poor idiot, or "inno-

cent," as they called him, who, when a sunbeam fell athwart his sight, as he knelt in church, cast his cloak across it, thinking it palpable, and—the mantle hung there, in mid-air, supported by the shining motes. Prayer and Faith, so ran the legend, worked this miracle ; for Heaven would not disappoint the idiot's trust.

It was a strange thought to enter into Mallory's breast, and he banished it, at once, and fiercely. Then, another recollection beset him—of a story that had been rife among the peasantry, when he was a boy, relating to a rich man—an arrogant, sinful scoffer, a hater of his fellow-men, and oppressor of the poor ; whose life, indeed, was a long scene of selfishness ; and it chronicled how this man, as he walked one day, beheld a miserable, mangy dog, lying in the gutter, dying from starvation, yet too feeble to move from the spot where he writhed ; and how the proud sinner, as in mere wantonness, kicked a bone that lay in his path towards the perishing cur, and then went, unthinkingly, on his way ; and how the man died, and went to doom—condemned to ever-during torment ; but, wonderful to tell, the *foot* which had kicked the bone to a helpless dog, did not suffer, like the rest of his body, in endless fire, but was thrust out of the flame unscathed, because that limb alone had been the instrument of the *one* good deed which the sinner had performed in his earthly life.

Mallory, as he reflected, began to shudder, and a cold sweat broke from his yellow face. He struggled to divest himself of thought—of memory. He started up in his bed, gazing anxiously about him ; then crept from beneath

the clothes, and stole to the wooden stand, and put away the broken glass, with its flowers, to a corner where they could not meet his gaze. Then he placed the bar against his door, and crawled back to his pillow. It was a sad spectacle! that old man shuffling over the floor, listening at the door, crouching at the hearth, where lay concealed his hoarded gold, and finally, shivering back to his pallet, lifting his pillow, and drawing from beneath a few silver coins, wherewith to glut his eyes with the white leprosy that had made him an incarnation of grovelling avarice.

Presently, while yet the miser gazed at the money, a sense of weariness came over him, and his feeble frame sank into slumber, its withered arms dropping on the bedside, its lean fingers still clutching the pieces of coin. Then, as he slept, the sunbeams stole nearer to him, and fine particles of perfume were liberated from the faded flowers, and followed the shining rays; while, back, at the corner of the room, and down in the fire-place, dark shadows jostled together, grotesquely crowding each other, to escape from the increasing light. Thus surrounded, Mallory the miser began to dream.

Far away, up the bright hills of childhood, the old man wandered in his slumber, becoming once more a sunny-haired boy, with laughter in his heart and hopes garlanded about his forehead; climbing a mother's knee, and gambolling with a brother, fair and sinless as himself. A smile illumined the sleeping dotard's features, as the sunbeam of childhood stole through his dream.

Then the vision changed, and he stood, with his brother, beside their mother's grave, and wrung his companion's

hand, as they parted—one orphan to go to the far land of India, the other (himself) to remain at the old home; and here, the sunbeam began to flicker, and the smile faded from Mallory's sleeping face.

Another change in his dream: The brother had returned from India with a small fortune, the fruit of toil and thrift, and bringing with him a young daughter, the love-pledge of a lost wife; returned, with an incurable disease, to die in his native land, leaving the child to her uncle's care, as guardian of the patrimony which was to be hers in the future. At this stage of the old man's dreaming memories, there was a frown, instead of a smile, upon his sharp lineaments, and the crooked shadows that had been crouching in corners, glided thickly up to the bed, scaring away the sunbeams from Mallory's pillow. The miser's lips cleaved together, and drops of perspiration hung upon his brow. Ah! miserable dream! he beheld, through the misty past, the parting look of his dying brother, heard the broken accents of that brother's voice, committing a sacred charge to his hands; and then he remembered how he had broken the trust; how he had seized, by fraud, the orphan's fortune, and reared her as a dependent upon his bounty, until, at last, she had fled away from his inhospitable roof, with a stranger who had won her love—her fate thenceforth remaining a mystery; how he, the forsworn brother and fraudulent guardian, had thenceforth become a slave to gold, and had known no love in the world, and had sunk, lower and lower, in self-imposed misery, till he had become—Mallory the Miser of Kolephat College!

This was the miser's dream ; and he awoke from it with his heart like ice in his withered bosom, but with brain burning as a flame—awoke, and leaped wildly from his bed, grappling with air, and clutching his pillow in frenzy. The shadows were all about his bed ; the sunbeams had shrunk away to the cold casement, leaving that wretched old man with only nightmare shapes at his side. His blue lips quivered, his teeth chattered, and he spread out his talon-fingers, as if to exorcise the memories of the past.

"Ah—ha !" he gasped ; "my brother's child ! my brother's child ! where is she ?"

"*Dead !*" echoed from his icy heart. "Dead ! dead !" murmured the miser. "My brother ! my mother's boy ! my brother's child ! I wronged them ! Oh ! villain that I am !"

He swayed to and fro, the red gleam in his eyes, which rolled incessantly in their sockets.

"Gold !—money !—*that* did it all—*that* hardened my heart agi'n the child of my mother's son ! O cursed money—it ates my soul !"

The miser's eyes, wandering wildly, fell upon the coins of silver that had fallen from his relaxed fingers, during sleep, and now lay scattered on the bed-cover, as if mocking him with their glitter. He gazed at them, gnashing his teeth ; his lips moved, as though to curse them ; then, with a quick grasp, he gathered the pieces together, held them aloft a moment in his extended hand, and dashed them down upon the floor.

They fell and rolled away, like demons fleeing from a repentant heart. The old man listened to their clatter, a

smile breaking over his grim face. In that moment, the evil spirit went out from him; a weight slid from his breast; he sat up, once more, upon his humble couch—no longer the writhing miser, but calmed, and in his right mind. He raised his long fingers to his eyes, and felt that tears were there—blessed tears, such as he had not shed since boyhood; for the waters of a soul were stirred, and welled up through the desert of his time selfishness. Mallory the Miser wept like a young child.

As he thus sat, the door was opened softly, and Margaret came in, with Fanny; and there glinted also through the casement a new ray of sunlight; and the withered flowers gave forth a fresh perfume. She paused, on seeing tears upon the old man's cheeks; but Mallory beckoned with his shrunken hand, and said to Fanny—

"The posies! the posies, my child."

The little one took the flowers to him, and he pressed them to his withered mouth, and then said, in a tone that was quite unlike his usual hard accents:

"Say your prayers, darlin—I want to hear them!"

Oh! the music of that child's evening orison, as it rose trustingly from her lips, when she had kneeled down by the pallet side! Ah! the radiant wonder, and beautiful sympathy that shone upon the face of the seamstress, as she knelt, also, and joined in the worship! A miracle had been worked in that dim room of the tenant-house—a miracle of love, and faith, and charity.

When the orison ceased, Mallory clasped her hand, and Margaret saw that no longer a red gleam was in his eyes, but, instead, a look of quiet and sadness. But as

Fanny had risen, and he looked down upon her gentle face, a faded ribbon that she wore about her neck became loosened, and a small locket-case attached to it dropped upon the bed. It was the miniature of her mother—sole relic of the poor woman who had died, unknown and friendless, in the room below—and which, from that hour when the sympathizing policeman had restored it to her, the poor child had hidden close to her heart. The likeness lying uppermost, as it fell, its lineaments attraced Mallory's glance; he grasped it nervously—his gaze became riveted at once—grew steadfast for the space of a minute—and then, with a gasping cry, he exclaimed—

"This—this picture!—where got ye it?"

"It's my mother's likeness!" said Fanny, tears gushing from her eyes, as she answered.

Mallory remained for a time silent, his regards wandering from the portrait to the orphan, his hands shaking, his lips parted, and tremulously agitated. Then he bent down, and cast his long arms about the child's neck, and leaned his head upon her forehead, clasping her closely, kissing her convulsively.

"You're my child," he murmured, hurriedly. "You're *her* baby—*her* baby!"

It was strange to behold that old man, shaking as with palsy, and straining to his withered breast the weeping infant; strange to hear the muttered interjections that he uttered. Margaret looked on in silence till he became calmer, and then, taking one of Mallory's hands, and winding her arm around the orphan's waist, she stood by the bedside, and listened to a strange history of wrong

and remorse and retribution—a recital of events such as were hinted at in the changing shadows of the miser's dream—discovering to her apprehension, at last, that Fanny was the grandchild of the miserable but now repentant man before her. In return, Mallory, with bowed head, heard of the fate of his brother's daughter, perishing neglected and alone, within sound of his voice, while he, wretched one, watched and hoarded his ill-gotten wealth, in squalor and darkness.

"*You* shall have it, avick!—all! it's for *you*, now! Sure it was *hers*, and no luck ever come to me with it."

The miser bent his body, swaying his head to and fro, as remorse stirred in his heart. But Fanny put her hand to his grey beard, and said softly—

"Please, let Miss Margery say her good prayers."

And Margery prayed, fervently and long, whilst Mallory hearkened and was soothed; but when the seamstress rose to go, he would not suffer the child to accompany her, but held the little one's hand, drawing her near—very near to his heart.

Chapter XXIX.

The Catholic Child.

THE experiment of a ragged school in Kolephat College had been modestly inaugurated, but it was not long before its influence became manifest; its presence eliciting various comments, according to the light in which the tenants regarded it; and Margaret Winston found herself suddenly brought out from the seclusion of her late toil at the needle to the position of a much-talked-about and sufficiently-abused personage. Every morning, when the urchins who regularly attended her class, under the incentive of kind words and the daily allowance of food, appeared with faces more or less clean, and dispositions in a greater or less degree docile, there came likewise to the door of the school-room a crowd of slatternly women and not a few coarse men, with a dull expression of curiosity upon their countenances, striving to obtain a look at the "missus;" and many were the remarks upon her personal appearance, her motives and objects, that Margaret constantly heard from those self-constituted inspectors of her labors. But as she progressed, from day to day, the task became easier and the

rewards sure; for in the neglected little ones who listened to her simple instructions, she began to discover sensibilities, and aptitudes, and yearnings of the spirit, which were as grapnels upon her sympathies, uniting the poor children with her purest hopes and aspirations. Some twenty boys and girls, their ages varying from the infant of four to the child of twelve, soon attended pretty punctually at every session. Among these were Bob the Weasel and Fanny, who learned everything surprisingly fast, her own young brother Harry, and the orphan child of Keeley, who himself had wandered nobody could tell whither, after his dead wife had been buried by the charitable aid of Mr. Granby. Margaret was much interested in this last unhappy orphan of poverty and dissipation, who soon became reconciled to a more peaceful shelter than she had ever known before.

Meantime, in view of her new duties, Margaret remained in her old apartments of Kolephat College, and Emily Marvin, dreading a repetition of Mr. Jobson's proffers of friendship, removed from Foley's Barracks, and engaged a room contiguous to that tenanted by her friend. This, it is true, she seldom occupied, her week-days being passed at the residence of kind Mrs. Richmond, who still gave employment to her, and with the sympathy of a good heart made each day's industry attractive to the orphan's nature. Emily loved to talk to Margaret of her new patroness—of the sad grace which entered into all her movements—of her thoughtfulness and care for dependants and the poor. She had promised, Emily said, to come, when the spring opened, and see the school at

Kolephat College ; but her health was not good at present, and she dared not venture out, even in her carriage. Something, the apprentice said, concerning Mr. Richmond who had been sick, and confined to his room on one occasion a whole day, during which time his lady was very dejected, and continually going to her husband's chamber, to return to her boudoir, almost immediately, sadder than ever. But Emily had never seen Mr. Richmond, she said, in answer to a question of Margaret's—only his portrait that hung upon the wall. But it was ever a theme of wonder to the young girl, how a lady like Mrs. Richmond, so amiable, with such a fine-looking husband, and surrounded by every luxury, could yet seem so unhappy ; and then Emily would talk of the elegant velvet carpets, the rosewood covered with blue and gold, and green and gold brocades, the curiously carved tables and étagères and escritoires, and medallion chairs ; the mahogany and oak furniture, the pictures and chandeliers—all the accumulations of wealth, and art, and taste—ah ! was it not pardonable if the poor child dwelt with a sigh upon the enumeration of these ? and was it not sad, at last, to hear from her lips the expression of her pity for one who possessed them—" Poor Mrs. Richmond ! she's not happy after all !"

Thus passed away three months of winter, and the early spring days began to come, slowly, one by one, loosening the grasp of frost upon town and country. The school progressed, and was blessed daily in the influences that it sent forth upon the neighborhood ; Mr. Granby and Samson came regularly to visit it, bringing food for

the children, and a portion, likewise, for the more deserving to take home to their parents. Rob Morrison's sharp intelligence began to develop itself in close application and quick reception of knowledge, and Fanny's bright intuition became the means not only of pleasure to herself and Margaret Winston, but to the old man, her grandfather, who began to dote upon the child, listening for hours to the music of her voice, as she read to him the books mastered by her daily lessons in the school below. Mallory was able, as the spring approached, to go out again upon the street—not any more to rake for broken coals in the gutters, and totter homewards with them, to his dismal straw and hidden treasure ; but to procure, bit by bit, articles of comfort for his room, and, oftener, to purchase little dainties wherewith to surprise Fanny, when she should come to read to him on his return. Truly, God had worked a great change in the ancient miser's heart.

Peleg Ferret did not trouble himself about the new use to which one of his tenant-rooms was appropriated, satisfied that he received his rent promptly from Samson. He was, moreover, occupied by his yet unsuccessful search after Kolephat's lost child ; having, most unaccountably, lost sight of Monna Maria and her interesting family, who had suddenly changed their quarters, leaving no trace of their whereabouts. Ferret knew that, as spring approached, it was customary for many of the organ-grinding fraternity to disperse on expeditions to other cities and the interior towns, and, consequently, he feared that the Italian woman, with her flitting friends, was now

far away from the metropolis ; nevertheless, he followed up such clues as he could gather from those who had known Old Pris, contriving, in so doing, to learn much more than he chose to make his employer acquainted with. He had carried his inquiries back to the period when Kolephat's babe was missed, ascertaining that, about the same time, a whole family, save an infant, had perished by cholera in a cellar of Foley's Barracks, the child being found clinging to its dead mother's breast, taken care of by some poor neighbor, and growing up one of the neglected children abounding in the streets. This, of course, did not interest the agent—nor would it have interested him even had he beheld in Rob Morrison, of the tenant-house school at Kolephat College, that same poor foundling, no longer abandoned, but, thanks to Christian charity ! cherished and protected, and trained to become useful in the future—a blessing and a reward to his kind benefactor, Mr. Granby.

But Ferret discovered that Old Pris the rag-picker had wandered away from the city about the time of the child's disappearance, and that, a year or more afterwards, Monna Maria, the Italian, was first known among other denizens of Foley's Barracks, whence she afterwards removed, and that, in her motley family, there was a very handsome little girl, who had, within a year or two past, been seldom seen. This child the agent rightly conjectured to be the dancing-girl he had seen in Monna Maria's room, and the more closely he followed the few threads of the past, of which he could take hold, the more he became convinced that the reputed Italian girl was no

other than the "lost jewel" of his employer, Kolephat. But of Monna Maria he had lost sight. She had changed her dwelling-place, as it seemed, on the day following that unceremonious visit received from the collector of rents; but in what direction she had vanished, Ferret could not, as yet discover. Indeed, Monna Maria had her own reasons for evading the agent's search.

"*Bambina!*" she said to Ninetta, when, at her new quarters, in a tenant house quite as squalid as that she had left, she saw the beautiful dancing-child again by her side—"*Bambina!* that man—the heretic—would steal thee away—kidnap thee, if he could, little one."

"Sweet Virgin!" exclaimed Ninetta. "Is it true, Monna Maria?"

"Ay, child! the vile heretic would steal thee for the Jews, who desire to turn thee from our Holy Church, and make thee like themselves—the devil's children!"

Ninetta clasped her small hands together, gazing at the old woman's forbidding features, in mute terror.

"Hast thy rosary with thee, *bambina*? and thy *Agnus Dei*? and thy *scapula*? And the box of holy water—is it always near thy bed?"

"Yes, dear Monna."

"And thou goest to confession twice a week?"

"Surely, dear Monna."

"Then, thou art safe, I trust, from the heretic wolves. Where is thy rosary, *bambina*?"

"Here it is, Monna Maria," answered the child, drawing from her pocket a string of black and white beads, with a small gilt crucifix depending.

"Now, Ninetta!" continued the Italian woman, "kiss the cross, and promise that you will never leave Monna Maria, to go with the wicked heretics!"

She pressed the beads, as she spoke, to Ninetta's lips, and the dancing-girl said solemnly—"I promise." Then Monna Maria laid her hand upon the child's head, and muttered—

"My blessing, if thou keep'st thy word—and my curse, if thou dost deceive me."

When Ninetta had left her, the old woman clasped her hands, and bowed down on the floor, while tears streamed from her black eyes, and she beat her breast with heavy strokes. "God have mercy!" she said; "Christ have mercy! Save the little one from heretics! Thou dost know that the Jew is her father, and that, if she be restored to him, he will make her a Jewess, and thus she will be doomed eternally! O Saviour of the world! let her not be lost from thy holy Catholic Church."

Thus prayed this woman—a bigot and fanatic in the cause of what she believed to be religion. More intelligent than the class by which she was surrounded, Monna Maria was yet a slave to the tenets and dogmas of her Church; and, though she well knew that the child whom, ten years before, she had received naked from the hands of Old Pris, was none other than the lost daughter of Kolephat the broker—though she could not but know that Ninetta, in being restored to her natural protector, would be placed in comfort and luxury, while her own poor condition would, doubtless, be materially improved, through the child's affection—still, one idea mastered all

other emotions in her breast: she feared that Ninetta would be forced to change her belief for that of the detested heretics, whom, in her bitter prayers, she consigned to eternal perdition. Bigotry controlled the woman's heart, and she was willing rather to see Ninetta dead at her feet, with the rosary clasped in her hands, than to behold her living in opulence, but estranged from the altar and confessional. Alas! Monna Maria, in her sectarianism, was not more blamable than many who, calling themselves Evangelical Christians, have yet no charity for Christians of other denominations, but consign them, even as did the poor Italian woman, to "ever-during shame and ceaseless woe."

Ninetta was glad to be away from the woman of gloomy faith, whom yet she regarded as a mother, having never known other care than hers, till she became the pupil of a ballet-woman and her husband, the posturer Freidrich. The poor child's situation with these people was not a pleasant one; for they obliged her to stand, during long hours, upon her toes, extend her limbs at painful angles, and stretch her tender muscles to the verge of distortion. Sometimes Alsace, the wife of Freidrich, would compel Ninetta to practise during many hours, in which time she would become so weary as to faint away, whereupon they would lay her upon her little bed, in a dark room, to sleep off fatigue and insensibility. On week-day nights, the little one appeared in tableaux with the posturist, at a model-artist exhibition, and on the Sabbath evenings danced in a *casino;* and these were the pleasantest portions of Ninetta's life; for she then received presents of

confections, and pieces of money, and wreaths of flowers, thrown to her upon the stage, as a compliment to her grace and beauty. Very proud and happy was the child, on these gala occasions, and especially on the Sunday nights when she danced in a German garden, before many hundreds of people, who set up loud shouts of welcome when she appeared, and cried "brava! bravissima!" at every fine *pas* that she executed. Poor infant! she cared not that Maestro Freidrich (as he called himself) and his French wife were the shrewd ones who profited by the money accruing from her dancing—except small *douceurs* which she was permitted to receive, and hoarded faithfully for Monna Maria!—she thought not of the cruel avarice that exposed her young loveliness to the rude gaze of beer-drinking guests in a casino! She only enjoyed, in her simplicity, the intoxicating incense of applause, which, whether rising in the gilded opera-house, or the low bagnio, is always sweet to the poor slaves of the footlights.

Ninetta, after leaving the Italian woman, on the morning at which the brief conversation above related took place, tripped lightly away towards the obscure theatre in which she was to rehearse her nightly part; but as she did so, a pair of sharp eyes suddenly observed her figure, and presently a man walked slowly behind her, watching the route she took, and following at a distance, till the street was reached in which the play-house was situated. This man was Peleg Ferret, who, after losing sight of the Italian woman during several months, now, with great satisfaction, encountered the child in whom he was still more interested.

The agent rubbed his hands, in self-gratulation, as he traced Ninetta to the door of the theatre ; and he was not long in making up his mind as to the further course he should pursue. He lingered in the neighborhood, closely scrutinizing the door at which the child had entered, until, in an hour's time, he beheld her re-emerge, accompanied by a man and woman, who were no other than the posturer Freidrich and his wife ; then, keeping constantly in their rear, he tracked their steps to Foley's Barracks—a place well known to the collector as a tenant-house owned by a capitalist who dwelt abroad, confiding its management to the broker Jobson. Mr. Ferret was overjoyed in beholding the object of his search so familiarly located, and he did not check his curiosity until, ascending the dark and narrow stairs of the Barracks, just behind the unsuspecting maestro, he ascertained the very room in which the dancing-girl and her protector dwelt. It was a white day for Peleg Ferret, and he resolved to make the most of it, by calling at once upon his acquaintance, Mr. Jobson, in order to inquire concerning his model-artist tenants.

Mr. Jobson was in his cubby-hole, and received his brother agent with due dignity, but in an affable manner, inasmuch as Ferret represented, in a degree, the wealth of Mordecai Kolephat. To his inquiries, however, concerning the dancing-girl, Mr. Jobson could, as he averred, give no information. Mr. Jobson said he did not trouble himself about that sort of tenants, you know, so long as they paid their rent punctually, you know ; he did recollect a child—yes, a little girl in tights—balancing on a

man's arm ; they had been tenants for some months—yes, the man's name was on his books—Freidrich Kamph. But, what in the world could Mr. Ferret want with such people ?—had they left Kolephat College without paying ? of course, that could not be, you know.

Mr. Ferret answered, "No, indeed !" and protested he had no particular motive—except curiosity, and all that ; after which, chuckling at his own shrewdness, the agent took his leave. Mr. Jobson rubbed his hands and began to ruminate, when he was called upon by another visitor, Mr. Richmond.

"Ah ! Mr. Richmond ! glad to see you ! By the way, just had a call from Mordecai Kolephat's agent—Ferret, you know."

Richmond started, as if Mordecai Kolephat occupied his own thoughts.

"Yes ! called to ask about some vagabond tenants of mine—model-artists, you know, and a little dancing-girl."

"Hoh!" cried Mr. Richmond. "What is that, Jobson ? a dancing-girl—Ferret inquired about her ? And, pray, who is the dancing-girl ?" he asked, in a more subdued tone.

"'Pon my word, I havn't an idea ! but there's something queer about it. Ferret is a crafty dog—some motive, you know."

"Where is the child ?—this dancing girl ?" demanded Richmond, quickly. "Could I not see her ?"

"Why, 'pon my word, Mr. Richmond. Are *you* curious about these people ? Well, really" ——

"Did you understand me ? I should like to see this child !" said Richmond.

"Oh, certainly, you know ! They're at the Barracks,

it's likely. Maybe you'd walk round there, Mr. Richmond —it's only a step, you know."

Mr. Richmond said he would go, and together they went to the tenant-house, where the gamester's refined sensibilities were somewhat shocked by the sights, sounds, and smells of a neighborhood wherein the winter's filth had been suffered to accumulate, and which the spring weather was now converting into a laboratory of poisonous gases, distilling disease and death. Mr. Richmond held a lavendered handkerchief to his nostrils, until he had hurriedly traversed the alleys and entries, and, under pretence of examining the building, obtained a glance at Ninetta, in the room of Freidrich Kamph and his partner Alsace. What Mr. Richmond's reflections were, as he looked upon the young girl's face, tracing, with a quick eye, the softened Asiatic lineaments, and dreamy expression, and satisfying himself at once that the dancing-girl was of the same blood as that which ran in the veins of Kolephat's niece, Rebecca, were not, of course, divined by Mr. Jobson ; but as he emerged from the tenant-house to the light of day, it was manifest that some new and deep emotions were agitating his mind. Had Rebecca been present, indeed, and able to read her lover's thoughts, the heiress might have shrunk into wretchedness and despair ; for they pictured dark alternations of crime, in which she, wretched one ! was to be an instrument or a victim.

Richmond parted from Mr. Jobson, at the adjoining street, saying that he would again see him, on important business ; and the broker was thus left to his own reveries, once more.

Chapter XXX.

The Tempter.

MR. MORDECAI KOLEPHAT was confined to his chamber ; anxiety of mind preyed upon his bodily faculties, reducing to weakness the vigorous system that had withstood the trials of a lengthened life. He had been very ill, during many weeks, and was now with difficulty convalescing ; for the recollection of the rag-picker's revelation was constantly present, harrowing his thoughts by night and day. He was alone ; his usual attendant, Rebecca, having descended to the parlor, to see—Miriam Wolff.

It was, indeed, *her* "Miriam Wolff ;" for Richmond had called to speak with her upon an important matter. He had visited the heiress often, during Kolephat's seclusion up stairs, and the young girl had become accustomed to these clandestine interviews ; but this evening he had news to tell her—he had discovered the lost child, from whose restoration they had so much to fear.

"Is she beautiful ?" was Rebecca's question, when, in a few rapid words, Richmond had related his interview with Mr. Jobson, and subsequent sight of Ninetta. The lover

answered carelessly that she was a pretty child, and then said, in a more earnest manner—

"Rebecca, there is no doubt of this girl's identity! She possesses all your family traits, and, once seen by your uncle, she will be received as his child. What is to be done?"

"Dear Charles! why do you look at me so strangely?" asked Miriam, her eyes drooping beneath the singular gaze which Richmond bestowed upon her.

"Because—I would have you answer me. How is this foundling to be prevented from usurping your place—how are you to escape—beggary?"

The last word was spoken with a bitterness that made the young girl start, and exclaim—

"Oh Charles! do not talk so wildly. Tell me—what can I do? I am dependent on my uncle! I have no one else but you, dearest—in all the world."

"Pshaw! you care not for me!" exclaimed the man, abruptly, withdrawing his hand, which Rebecca had held within her own.

"Charles!—dear Charles! you know that I love you! Oh! how devotedly!" She burst into tears, and bowed her head upon his shoulder.

"And you will permit this—dancing-girl—to come between yourself and fortune!—you, who are used to luxury"——

"But *you* are rich, Charles!"

This was said with great simplicity, and it revealed, at once, the entire confidence which the fair girl reposed in the being whose blandishments had won her heart, and

whom she believed loved her with the same devotedness that she herself felt—a devotedness that was content to wait, through patient years, until the period when he should be free to call her his wife—a trust which invested all his wishes with the sanctity of love to guide her actions.

"I may or may not be rich," answered Richmond, evasively. "Speculations in business may make the millionaire a bankrupt in a day."

"But you are not" ——

"No matter what *I* am, Rebecca," replied the lover. "You have it in your power to make me—both of us—happy—perhaps rescue me from ruin! Yet you hesitate—you care not" ——

"Charles!" murmured Rebecca, sadly. "Do not say I care not. What—O tell me—what can I do!"

Richmond passed his arm about the girl's waist, and drew her close to him, as they sat upon the sofa. He bent down and whispered in her ear—

"Your uncle has been very ill—his life was thought to be in danger."

"But he is now recovering," said Rebecca.

"It is—not—necessary—that he—should—recover!" continued Richmond, speaking very deliberately. "It would be better for *us* if he should not."

He paused, but Rebecca remained silent, though he could feel her heart heave and her frame tremble, as though, with woman's quick perceptions, she already understood him.

"Should he die *now*, it would be considered a relapse.

Should he die *at once*, this—dancing-girl—will never be brought to the house. He will never see her, and you will be his heiress. Is it not so, dearest?"

Richmond bent his lips to those of Rebecca, and she raised her eyes, fixing them intently on his face; but yet replied not.

"Do you not hear me, love?" whispered the tempter.

"Yes—yes," murmured the girl.

"Your uncle is old—he has outlived enjoyment, Rebecca."

"Yes, dear," answered the Jewess, abstractedly. "He is old."

"You comprehend, dearest! Look at this!" Richmond drew from his vest pocket a diminutive phial, filled with a colorless liquid. "Rebecca," he said, "a single drop of this transparent oil will bring eternal sleep, and leave no trace. Will you do with it as I shall direct?"

Rebecca answered not. Her eyes, which had been fixed upon her lover's face, closed suddenly, and her frame grew heavy, as it leaned against him. She had sunk into a swoon, overpowered by the words to which she had listened.

"Maledictions!" muttered Richmond, his forehead corrugating gloomily, as he raised the young girl's head, and saw that her countenance was pale as alabaster. "A soft-hearted fool!" He hastily concealed the phial, and then essayed to restore the Jewess to animation; but some minutes elapsed before—under the influence of his mocking caresses—the poor girl's eyes again opened, to dwell at once upon his face. As her lips moved to speak,

an abrupt ringing of the hall-door bell announced a visitor, and presently, at the servant's response, a man's voice was heard in the vestibule. Rebecca started, and exclaimed—

"It is Mr. Ferret!"

"Ferret!" muttered Richmond, as the new-comer's footsteps were heard ascending the stairs to Mr. Kolephat's chamber. "He comes, then, to inform your uncle that he has found his long-lost child. Rebecca! do you hear me?—to bring this beggar-minx!"

"Oh! Charles! dearest Charles! what shall I do?"

She clasped her hands, and raised her glance appealingly to the face of him she loved so fervently.

"Obey me!" answered the man, in a meaning tone. "There is no time to lose! A drop of this potion in your uncle's medicine will never be detected, and to-morrow we shall have nothing to fear!"

"Charles! I would lose my soul for you!"

"Hush, dearest! what is a year or two in an old man's life? He will rest, and we shall be happy! You will do it."

"Ah! do you love me, Charles?"

"As my life, dearest."

He bent over the maiden, whose face was white as marble, and placed the phial in her hand. Her fingers mechanically clasped it, but trembled violently.

"Courage, dearest! It is for *our* happiness!"

Rebecca rose from the sofa, and stood before her lover.

"Charles!" she exclaimed, solemnly, "will you swear to love me always, if I do—this act?"

"How can I do otherwise, sweet? You will be mine own one, love, by every tie."

"You will swear it, Charles?"

"I will swear it!"

"God forgive me!" cried the wretched girl. "I will obey you!"

She sank forward, as she spoke, and threw her arms about her tempter's neck. Richmond smiled triumphantly, as her face was hidden on his breast; but he kissed her cold forehead, and said—

"You are my own Rebecca!"

A few moments more and the gamester parted from the Jewess, at the door of the old man whose death he had schemed, and hurried along the street, enveloped in a heavy mantle. As he walked, he muttered—

"The Jew will go to-night, and then—Helen only stands between me and fortune! It is full time! for ruin is almost at my back! Fond fool! her wealth will all be mine!"

Fond fool! Could the cruel Richmond have looked back to Kolephat's parlor, after he had departed, he would have beheld Rebecca lying prone upon the floor, her hair dishevelled, her small hands pressed tightly on her bosom, where was hidden the phial of poison. Torn with terrible emotions, in which every impulse of right struggled with the temptings of wrong, while her mad passion for Richmond mingled in all, the wretched maiden suffered pangs unutterable, perished a thousand deaths, while meditating one. But still she cried, as though impelled by direful fate—

"I must perform his wish! I dare not disobey him!"

Meantime, Peleg Ferret, closeted with the broker, had revealed to him the important intelligence that traces of the lost child were gained. Kolephat's withered features brightened, as he listened. Extending his hand, he drew from beneath the bed on which he lay a small box, and directed Ferret to open it.

"It is what we sought at the money-lender's," he said, "recovered yesterday, and sent to me."

The agent looked, and saw a jet clasp, diamond-shaped, and of no great value. Its inside surface was corroded by rust, and the enamel much defaced; but Kolephat, shading his eyes, said—

"It was hers—the babe's trinket. You were right, Ferret. It clasped the girdle of my child."

"Then that foreign jade knows all about it, depend on't," cried Peleg Ferret. "She must be found by hook or crook, and obleeged to make her affidavy. That's the way to do it."

"But the child!—I must see her, Ferret. God help me! there is something tells me I shall recognize her at once! Ferret! this theatre of which you speak! can she not be found there? It is night already."

"Well, I presume!—Certingly—shouldn't wonder!" said the agent, hesitatingly, doubtful whether he should not procrastinate longer, in order to give his services a higher value. "But—you are sick, and couldn't go out." ——

"I am not sick! I am well!" exclaimed the old man, vehemently. "Ferret! I will go with you—to-night—to

that place, and satisfy myself, at once! My presentiment, I feel, will not mislead me; and I can no longer endure the agony of suspense. Go you, immediately, and order a carriage. Ring yonder bell!"

Kolephat spoke in the tone which Ferret knew was customary to him when determined to be obeyed; so, without another word, he summoned a servant, whom the Jew dispatched at once for his niece; and the agent then descended to procure a coach.

Rebecca faltered beneath her uncle's gaze, as he informed her, in a few words, that he was about to ride out with Ferret. Her heart smote her, as she saw the old man's eyes luminous with an expression that her quick intuition divined to be the anticipation of regaining his lost child; but, in the same moment, she thought of Richmond, and of the rival who was to usurp her place in Kolephat's heart and fortune. She felt, too, the phial of poison, lying cold, like a snake, upon her bosom.

"I shall return shortly, dear Rebecca!" said the uncle, when, after being wrapped closely in his outer garments, he extended his hand. His voice seemed more tender than usual, as if he even regretted that his niece must soon be secondary in his favor—so the girl's jealous thought interpreted its accents; but she answered only that she should await him.

Await him! with the fatal gift of her felon lover nestling close to her heart—await him! through the hours of his absence, contemplating that which she was to do! Oh! wretched Rebecca!

The carriage in which the agent and his employer sat

rolled rapidly through the streets, till it reached the shabby but densely populated locality where was situated the establishment—half theatre and half drinking-house —which, dignified by some classic name, and fronted with glaring transparencies, indicating its interior uses, attracted nightly a motley audience, to witness grotesque caricatures of sculptured gods and goddesses, illusions of various colored fire, dancing by scantily draped coryphees, and such other entertainment as could be afforded at the very low price charged for admission to the whole. The performance had just commenced when the new visitors were ushered into the close atmosphere of an ill-ventilated room, in which two or three hundred amusement-seekers were congregated; but Ferret found no difficulty in procuring seats for himself and companion. Presently, the curtain rose, and the curious eyes of the audience were directed to the stage, whereon a pile of male and female posturers were disposed in singular attitudes, and with painful contortions of limbs, representing, as was affirmed, some mythic scenes, which revolved, very obligingly, upon a circular platform, thus allowing appreciating spectators to view the interesting exhibition from every point, as it were, of the dramatic compass. Mr. Kolephat looked on, but seemed neither to understand nor appreciate.

Another spectacle with entangled groups, and slow revolutions, succeeded the first; and then another, and another; after which, performers with blackened faces sang buffo songs, thumbed banjos, and rattled castanets; these, in turn, were followed by a muscular man, who bent bars of iron and balanced plates and chairs; and then,

with a great scraping of fiddle bows, and amid loud cries from the audience, there bounded suddenly upon the boards a beautiful figure, which Ferret at once recognized as the dancing-girl whom he had seen at Monna Maria's.

It was evident that Mordecai Kolephat likewise recognized in that fair form—that eloquent face—something which recalled the past in vivid distinctness. The old man's eyes became riveted upon the graceful creature, tracing her light steps, following her swaying motion, until all other objects swam indolently before him—then faded from his gaze—and he saw but the one vision, soaring in the luminous air—saw but that one smiling, angel face, with its clusters of dark hair, its large, radiant eyes fascinating his own.

A clash of applause shook the slight walls of the building, as the execution of some difficult *pose* called forth the admiration of the motley spectators; but Mordecai Kolephat heard it not. His hands were lifted nervously, and outstretched, as though he would rush forward to the child; his lips parted, disclosing the teeth set rigidly together. But, as he gazed, suddenly all became vague before him; for Ninetta, concluding her dance, had disappeared from the stage. Mordecai half arose, uttered a sharp cry, and then, overcome by his emotion, sank back feebly into Ferret's arms, whilst the tumult of an *encore* resounded through the theatre. Little notice was taken, during the next few minutes, of aught save another dance, and thus the agent experienced no trouble in assisting his employer to the open air, which was now chill and raw, a drizzly rain commencing to fall, and wrapping all the streets

in misty gloom. Mr. Kolephat speedily revived, with the change of atmosphere, but his bewildered mind could only recall one image. "My child—my long-lost child!" he cried, piteously. "Take me to her, Ferret! Let me embrace the child of mine age!"

Ferret endeavored to calm his employer's agitation, representing that, as they knew the dwelling-place of the girl Ninetta, there would be ample time to visit her. But the old man, yielding only to the new impulse which controlled him, demanded to be at once conducted to that portion of the theatre appropriated to the performers, and Ferret, ascertaining the entrance thither, proceeded to lead the way. Mordecai had drawn from his pocket the small jet buckle—relic so long hidden in the dust of a pawnbroker's shelf—and pressing it to his lips, again and again, was murmuring prayers in which the name of his deceased wife mingled with that of their lost infant. Thus, clinging to his agent's arm, the Hebrew penetrated to the shabby recesses at the theatre's rear, where a couple of roughly-partitioned boxes constituted the private dressing-rooms of a dozen "artists" of the establishment. Arrived here, they sought the youthful danseuse, whose light footsteps seemed yet echoed on the stage, but, to Kolephat's dismay, she was nowhere to be found. In vain they questioned the stolid-looking master of the show, or his dwarfish assistant. These only knew that Mademoiselle Ninetta had gone, with the Maestro Freidrich and the Madame. They had hurried away.

Disappointed and reluctant, Mordecai Kolephat turned from the theatre, and, calling a coach, ordered it to be

driven to the locality called Foley's Barracks, in which, as Ferret had that day learned, the child Ninetta dwelt with her patrons. The agent took upon himself to ascend to the room occupied by Maestro Freidrich, and there found that individual, with his "madame;" but the child, they said, had not returned with them; she was, that night, to go home with her god-mother—with Monna Maria.

Ferret endeavored to ascertain the dwelling-place of Monna Maria, but neither the posturer nor his wife could return a satisfactory answer. "Monna Maria," they said, "lived in another tenant-house. Ninetta was accustomed to go home with her. She would be at the Barracks next day." This was all that could be gleaned by Peleg Ferret; so he returned to Mordecai Kolephat, in the carriage, chagrined at his want of success, and yet determined to turn the delay and disappointment to his own advantage.

Dark and dismal was the night, and very melancholy the drift of rain upon the pavement sounded to the old Hebrew's ears, as he awaited, in the coach, before Foley's Barracks, the return of Ferret from above. The scene he had witnessed at the theatre—the fleeting vision that had gleamed in his eyes, of the child whom his heart recognized as flesh of his flesh and blood of his blood—shone still before his straining gaze, chasing the gloom that surrounded him. His heart grew soft, and tears bedewed his cheeks, as he fancied the arms of that beautiful one about his neck, and those red lips parting to salute him with the long-hushed name of "Father!" But Ferret came, with chilling words, to tell that Ninetta was not

within the house, and Mordecai Kolephat sank back upon the carriage cushions, a desolate old man. The excitement which had upheld him gave way to dejection, and he replied no more to the agent's attempted consolation, but, burying his face in his hands, bowed himself in sorrowful reflection. It was only when, arrived at his own door, and assisted to its threshold, he turned to bid good-night to Ferret, that, with broken voice, he murmured—"Bring *her* to me, to-morrow !—bring hither my child, Ferret—or it will be too late—too late !" Then, assisted by a servant, and followed by his niece Rebecca, who had overheard his parting words, the Hebrew ascended, slowly and painfully, to his chamber. Fever burned in his brain, the effect of the late powerful excitement he had experienced ; but in his bosom lay a heavy coldness. He had seen his child—the daughter of his age ; but was she not worse, far worse, even, than a child of the streets ? was she not a castaway of the footlights—an outcast of the theatre ?

Chapter XXXI.

The Garroters.

WHEN Richmond left the house of Mordecai Kolephat, a tumult of contending hopes and apprehensions filled his bosom. The unhappy man had on that day learned that he was a bankrupt beyond hope of retrieval, and that legal steps were about to be taken by his creditors through which his situation must ere long be known to the world. Nearly all his means had been staked at the gaming table, during a year past, and his liabilities of "honor," as he termed them, were quite as large as those involved by his style of luxurious living. Save only a small inalienable income settled upon Helen, the selfish gamester had squandered, since his marriage, the large estate yielded to his control by a too-confiding wife; and now, in the future, he beheld but ruin, and meditated but crime. The knowledge of his impending bankruptcy had prompted him, months before, to weave his web of dissimulation around Mordecai Kolephat's niece, until now, under the influence of his specious temptings, the wretched girl had promised to commit a deed from the very thought of which her nature shrank as from a serpent. But what recked the schemer Richmond?—secure, as he believed himself, in Rebecca's love, and con-

fident that, even should his purpose be baulked, no peril would threaten himself, from any divulgement of his complicity by one who loved him with such regardlessness of self. "But it will *not* fail!" he muttered to himself, as, gathering his cloak about him, he traversed swiftly the twilight streets. "One drop of that subtle fluid will make the dotard sleep forever; and his recent sickness must preclude all suspicion of other agency. Helen," muttered the gamester, in continuation, and pausing, as if to ponder—"Helen may live or die—she stands not between me and fortune; for once let the Jew's wealth be Rebecca's, and—it is *mine!*"

Thus speculated Charles Richmond, with no feeling of remorse for the crime he had plotted—no sentiment of affection for the poor instrument he had chosen for its execution. Alas! remorse and love were alike alien to his breast—possessed as it had been, during years, by the demons of avarice and pride. From the unprincipled fortune-hunter, who had won a trusting woman's hand and heart, to the arrogant husband, neglecting her who had given him all; from the luxurious spendthrift, vying with other fashionable men in splendor of equipage and elegance of *ménage*, to the callous man of the world, living only for self-gratification; from the desperate gamester to the unscrupulous cheat, and from bankruptcy to premeditated villainy—these were but natural transitions, sequences of artificial life daily occurring in our midst, and yet, too oft, unheeded!

Wrapped in his dark cogitations, Richmond sought the gaming-house; but an excitement, such as play were

powerless to generate, already trembled through his nerves; growing more intense, as he reflected upon the fearful crime contemplated long, and now upon the eve of consummation. The figure of the old man Kolephat, as he had last beheld him, months since, resting on his cane at the door of his mansion, and looking up and down the street, with a melancholy scrutiny, as if seeking for the child whom he mourned anew—the pale face of Rebecca, as it had been uplifted to his own, when, falteringly, she had received the poison from his hand—these images rose to Richmond's fancy, present almost to his visual sense; and more than once he dashed his palm across his eyes as if to shut away the too-familiar lineaments of his victim and his dupe. He threw himself upon one of the soft couches in the gaming-saloon, striving to watch the players, but he could not banish other forms and faces crowding in between; he called for wine, and drank deep, but the draughts were but fuel to the fever, which grew fierce as the hours wore on; till, at length, perturbed and impatient, he again rushed to the streets, wandering he recked not whither. It was a fearful stake he risked that evening—involving life and death; what marvel, then, that the gaming-board and its surroundings offered too poor excitement to his chafed spirit! He had flung the die on which his soul was depending; the risk was dishonor—destruction; the prize, wealth—perdition.

"To-morrow!" he muttered, as he strode upon his way—"To-morrow will see the end of *this!*"

Ay, indeed! Charles Richmond! to-morrow will behold the end of this!

The night was dark, and heavy clouds, precursors of a coming storm, were hanging over the city; but, absorbed in his uncertain reveries, the gamester took no note of the direction whither his steps were tending, till, after traversing many squares, a wet wind sweeping up from the street, before him, suddenly blew his mantle apart, warning him of proximity to the water-side. At the same moment, a few drops dashing in his face intimated the impending rain. The blast, too, gathering strength, now began to moan through neighboring lanes and alleys, and Richmond, shivering under its rawness, slackened his pace, endeavoring to identify his locality. As he thus paused, a dull gleam of light, struggling through the red-curtained glass of a grocery at the nearest corner, caught his glance, and, approaching it, he opened the rough door and entered, at once, to shelter himself for a moment, and inquire concerning his whereabouts.

The grocery was of the usual type of those receptacles of decayed provisions, drugged articles of daily use, and poisoned alcoholic decoctions. A low ceiling, hung with onion-bunches, mouldy codfish, and half-rotted hams ; the single window strewed with dirty clay pipes and broken crockery ware ; the shelves filled with samples of supposititious tea, coffee, sugar, and flour ; the counter thick with greasy dirt; and at its extremity a few upright slats, forming a bar, behind which were dispensed the fiery preparations that, with fever, suffocation, filth, and poverty, made up the daily and nightly torment of the poor who thronged the neighborhood. At the present hour, some half dozen devotees surrounded this squalid shrine of

Bacchus; men and youths seated about a stove, and presenting, through an atmosphere of execrable tobacco smoke, a variety of countenances that were far from prepossessing the new-comer in favor of their owners. Richmond, however, advanced across the wet floor, and approaching one who wore a greenbaize coat, and whose round cheek, thick lips, and bulging eyes, proclaimed Teutonic origin, requested information regarding the locality in which he found himself.

The man addressed, whether from stupidity or design, stammered in his reply, but the voice of a man near him responded to Richmond's question. This one was apparently about fifty years of age, yellow-skinned, and villainously low-browed, with tangled elf-locks depending on his muscular neck; beside him sat a cadaverous-looking youth, with greenish eyes, whom Emily Marvin or good Mrs. Dumsey would have recognized at once as the coffin-maker's lad, the pilferer of the orphan girl's purse; and near this worthy was the bull-necked young man who had figured with him in the fireman's conflict, and who wore now, as on that occasion, a shirt of flaming red, with large bone buttons on its bosom. Richmond glanced from one to another of these personages, and could not fail to be convinced that he had chanced upon suspicious company. Nevertheless, he bowed, without apparent hesitation, in acknowledging the answer given to his question by the saffron-featured man, and then, rubbing his hands before the stove, demanded if there were a coach to be procured in the vicinity.

"*Of* course," the yellow man replied, briskly, "gen'

elman have a coach? Dick or Jim 'll go and get you one, sir."

"I shall be obliged to you," said Richmond, who was desirous of leaving the place as quickly as possible; for a certain personal uneasiness began to master his previous nervousness.

"Dick! go for a wehicle!" called out the elder speaker, upon which the red-shirted youth moved off, with alacrity, and Richmond fancied that he detected an interchange of looks between the round-faced vender of liquor and his saffron-skinned guest. Nevertheless, at so early an hour and in a populous neighborhood, the apprehension of danger did not give the gamester much thought; though he could not but notice that he had become an object of close scrutiny to all the occupants of the shop, who, sitting, or drinking at the bar, presented a sinister appearance that augured not well for their characters. He felt relieved, therefore, when Dick, returning, announced the coach, which, after throwing a piece of silver to the lad, and giving hasty directions to the driver, he entered, and was driven rapidly away; unnoticing, however, that two of his late companions ascended to the coach-box, and took post, raining though it was, with the man who guided the horses.

Seated in the carriage, Richmond's thoughts reverted to the fearful matter which had before occupied them; and again he became a prey to doubt and forebodings. With Kolephat, now, and Rebecca, was mingled in his memory, the form of another whom he had long since wronged and forgotten—the maiden who had earliest loved him, and

whose parting letter, the echo of a broken heart, had been perused by the devoted Helen on that fatal morning when she realized the full desolation of an unloved wife. The face—pale, thoughtful, sorrowing—of that first martyr to his selfishness—looked now upon him from the murk of night, blended with the despairing lineaments of Rebecca and the features of Kolephat, rigid in the ghastliness of death. "Horrible!" gasped the murderer, striking his forehead with his clenched hands; and then, suddenly, the stopping of the coach and abrupt unclosing of its door, startled his fevered brain, so that he sprang up wildly in the darkness.

"Gen'l'man want to stop?" demanded a voice at the open door. Richmond mechanically alighted from the carriage, and was received in the embrace of muscular arms, while simultaneously a hand was passed around his neck, constricting his throat nearly to suffocation.

"Hah!" gasped the gamester—but further exclamation was stifled; for a heavy blow fell upon his head, at the same instant that another hand dragged him to the pavement.

"Down with him! finish him!" cried a hoarse voice, which Richmond recognized as belonging to the yellow-faced man whom he had seen at the grocery. The conviction that he was in the grasp of ruffians, who had, without doubt, accompanied the treacherous driver of the coach, recalled the young man's faculties, and the love of life, strong within him, caused him at once to resist with all his strength. By a sudden and dexterous movement, he contrived to release his right arm from the ruffian who

had seized it, and, leaning back against the carriage, though the effort almost strangled him, he struck forward full into the face of the man who clutched his throat, whose fingers immediately left their hold. Then, gulping a quick breath, he shouted loudly—

"Help!—murder!—help!"

"Stab him!" muttered one of the assailants, and the words were followed by the lunge of a sharp blade, which pierced the gamester's side. Another cry broke from Richmond's lips, and then he felt himself dragged downwards, prone upon the pavement.

"Another like that, Jim!" cried the yellow-visaged man. "'Twill finish him!"

"I've dropped the knife," returned the cadaverous apprentice, with an oath; and then Richmond, as he struggled in the gloom, felt a loaded whip-handle descending again upon his forehead. His brain reeled, and his sight became clouded at once; but, ere he sank into insensibility, he was conscious of a short struggle above his head, and heard the quick report of a pistol. Then all grew dark around him.

Chapter XXXII.

The Dying Gamester.

THE school at Kolephat College had been blessed through the months during which Margaret labored in her vocation as teacher. Day by day, some new proselyte from the streets—some weed plucked by the wayside—was transplanted into the genial atmosphere of the small room where, recompensed by constant fruit, the toiling woman sought to nourish her young growth of souls.

"We have much for which to be thankful!" said Mr. Granby to the seamstress, as she sat one evening in his quiet library, with Emily Marvin, who had become a favorite of the good old man, as well as of Mrs. George, the housekeeper. "We have found, indeed that it is more blessed to give than to receive."

"I have been happier," answered Margaret, "since the school was opened—much happier than for years past."

"Because you have been doing good, my child," said Mr. Granby, "and because the blessing of God rests upon all that is done for humanity, in His name!"

Samson brought nearer to his master the stand, on which, as usual, lay the open Scriptures; and the old man, shading his eyes, read aloud, in his low but impressive

tones. The light fell downward upon Mr. Granby's brow, wreathing a halo in his reverend locks. A placid smile illumined his benevolent features, in which love and seriousness were united; indeed, his whole appearance, had there been no Bible before him, or had his voice been inaudible, might have reminded the most thoughtless observer that his calm spirit was soaring in pure communion with its Creator.

Samson sat upon a cushioned stool, his back and head propped by a massive side-board standing near the door. His eyes rested upon Mr. Granby's face with close attention, his lips moving in unison with the reader's accents. A weather-beaten, scarred, but honest and intelligent countenance was that of the negro, with a look of child-like confidence as he listened to the teachings of the "Good Book." His herculean proportions were in strong contrast with the fragile figure of his master, and it was an interesting spectacle to behold this type of physical power subdued at the feeble Rabbi's feet, and tears streaming profusely down his dusky cheeks.

"Let us pray," said the aged man, reverently closing the sacred volume, and sinking upon his knees. Samson did the same, bowing his head upon his muscular breast, and crossing his labor-seamed hands. Mrs. George knelt at a little distance, while Margaret and her friend prostrated themselves together.

There was no pride there, in the little circle of those so strangely brought together but a brief space before; no gilded seats separated rich from poor, no mummery of forms stifled the spirit of piety; but, together, with God's

holy Word before them, these earnest worshippers prayed in humility for the weary and way-worn of all His family. Master and servant—black and white—united in a heart-felt supplication for their common humanity; for the stranger and the alien, for the sinner and the righteous, for the oppressed and the enfranchised; a prayer of charity—fit oblation to the throne of Love!"

"Amen! amen!" murmured the negro, as with moist eyes, he rose from his knees, and then tenderly assisted his master, whose quiet features attested the inner peace of his heart. And as they stood thus together, with hands interclasped, one might not think that they were other than brothers—sons of the one great and eternal Father!

"Samson!" said the old man, as he leaned upon the black's stronger arm, "we are journeying together to our home!"

"Yes, massa," responded the negro, in his broken way. "Dat is so!—we is both berry old men, massa—we is."

"But not afraid to die, Samson!"

"Bress de Lord, no! Nebber 'fraid for de Lord Jesus to call, massa. When Samson's time come, he will pray to de Lord, and nebber fear de shadder ob death."

"No, Samson, my old friend!" cried his master. "Little cause to fear death have you, my boy. We have seen danger together, and have known Heaven's mercies in company. Samson! I trust neither of us will falter when the Master comes. May we ever be prepared, rather, to welcome Him."

"Ah, Massa Granby! de Lord grant Samson be taken fust."

"And would you leave your old friend alone, boy?"

"No, massa!" exclaimed the negro, bursting into tears. "Poor Samson serve you to the last! Many a time he hol' you in his arms when you was a chile. Maybe de Lord wills dat he hol' you when de angel comes! Samson nebber leave you! Bress de Lord, de old boy knows his duty."

The negro dashed his sleeve across his eyes, brushing away the tears which he could not restrain. His master pressed his hand with a fervent grasp.

"You are always the same true heart, boy," he murmured. "No kinder breast than yours could I find whereon to pillow my dying head. Did I not say, years ago, that I had found in my poor slave, as then you were, a friend who would never desert me?"

"Ah, Massa Granby, Samson nebber desarved half de good you said about him!"

"My good boy," replied the venerable man, "I have found you worthier than those whom the world places far above us both. We have been called 'Master' and 'Slave,' but your bondage to me, Samson, has been that of the heart."

"Yes, massa! what harm in de word 'slave,' when my heart only be chained in lubbing a kind massa? Samson rather be slave ten thousand times, dan part from Massa Granby." He bent his head, as he spoke, kissing the old man's hand.

"And have you never, indeed, regretted the choice

you made, when, twenty years ago, I offered you freedom and competence?—never repented following your old friend?"

"Nebber! nebber!" sobbed the negro. "Samson hab a white heart in his black bosom, and close down dere is de face ob massa, jes' like a lookin'-glass, forebber and ebber. Bress de Lord, dat put sense in de nigger's head."

He raised his glance upward, while tears rolled plentifully down his dark cheeks. Mr. Granby hastily wiped his own eyes and glanced at the young girls and Mrs. George. They, too, were weeping, and the stately housekeeper had even crept close to her sable friend, clinging to him as if in sympathy. At this moment, the sharp report of a pistol, in the street without, broke upon their silence, and whilst they yet listened, there came a loud and prolonged knocking at the house door. Samson started quickly, to answer the summons, followed into the hall by Mr. Granby and the alarmed housekeeper. Ere the door could be reached, however, another peal of the knocker shook the whole building, followed by a succession of shrill whistles, and the dull concussion of a club upon the pavement—the signal rap of the night policemen.

The night was dark, and had set in with gusty rain, beating through the hall when Samson cautiously opened the door, but the hanging lamp shed its gleams outward, showing two men standing upon the steps, and supporting in their arms the drooping figure of a third, whose eyes were closed, and whose face was covered with blood, which also saturated his clothing.

"Merciful heaven!" ejaculated Mr. Granby, "what is this?"

"My friend, here, has been attacked, and wounded," returned the voice of one who stood nearest. "I fear he is mortally hurt, and the hospital is far."

"An' we want his deppysition," said another voice, which Mr. Granby recognized as as that of an elderly guardian of the night, whose patrol was on neighboring streets.

"Come in, at once!" cried Mr. Granby. "The front room!" continued he, opening a door upon the right, while Samson proceeded to assist in sustaining the insensible stranger, upon whose face the lamp-light now fell directly, revealing features of manly beauty, overspread by a greyish shade, and showing thick curly hair matted with blood, where it clustered about the forehead. Mr. Granby had but an instant to note this, ere he was startled by a sudden cry from the library door, where the females had remained. The next moment, Margaret Winston darted past him, paused, with clasped hands, before the wounded stranger, perusing his lineaments, and then sank beside him on her knees, sobbing brokenly:

"It is he!—it is he!"

"Oh, sister!" cried Emily Marvin, who had followed her friend. "It is Mrs. Richmond's husband!"

Margaret only responded by hollow murmurs, scarcely audible, as she passed her hand under the head which rested immovable upon the cushions of the couch whereon the wounded man had been laid.

"Do *you* know him?"

Emily looked up, and met the glance of a young gen-

tleman, one of the two persons who had supported the injured stranger.

"Do you know Mr. Richmond?" Emily was about to answer, when Mr. Granby interposed—

"Whoever he be," said the old gentleman, "it is plain that he should at once have medical aid. Samson, run for a physician!"

The negro needed no second mandate, but at once pressed his way through the throng of spectators, residents of the neighborhood, who, alarmed by the report of firearms, had by this time, gathered from all quarters, in front of Mr. Granby's house. Interrogatories regarding the affray were propounded from a dozen tongues at once, but the aged watchman could only relate how he had heard the cry of murder, and, speeding towards it through the darkness, had suddenly encountered the wounded stranger, supported by the young gentleman now present, in whose hand was a pistol which he had just discharged at a carriage that was driven off at a furious rate, and to the box of which three men were clinging.

"And the young gentleman!—could he give any information?"

None, save that he had been drawn by the cry of murder, and, beholding a single man contending with three ruffians, discharged his pistol immediately; the assailants then mounting a coach which stood near, and driving furiously away.

While the young man was speaking, Margaret Winston had arranged the pillows under Richmond, and now gazed

fixedly upon the pale, bloodstained features of the unhappy man. It was apparent to Mr. Granby, who observed her with a troubled look, and marked the shivering sigh which agitated her whole frame, that she cherished some strange interest in him who lay before her. He glanced at Emily Marvin, but the orphan seemed as much perplexed as himself, in regarding her adopted sister, who, after wiping the blood from Richmond's cheeks and brow, murmured, in an appealing tone—

"Oh, will not assistance come? He is—dying!"

The throng outside divided, at this moment, to admit Samson. He was followed by three policemen, and accompanied by a physician, who proceeded at once to an investigation of Richmond's hurts, his every movement anxiously watched by the spectators.

"There is but a flicker of life," said the doctor, after probing the wounds, and staying the flow of blood. "I fear the patient is mortally injured."

"Can't he be brought to the 'ospital?" asked a policeman, whose accent betrayed his English birth. "We'll want his deppysition, you know."

"An' who'd be afther takin' a dead man to the hospital, sure?" rejoined another of the officials.

"Mein Gott! is der man dead?" inquired the third guardian of the public, who was a short and very plethoric German.

"He cannot be removed," said the physician; "the utmost quiet must be preserved; and I would recommend the immediate departure of all whose presence here is not necessary."

The crowd, which had penetrated from the outer door to the very edge of the couch, gave way before Samson's courteous energy, and in a short time, the room was comparatively cleared of intruders. Meantime, the physician applied such immediate restoratives as Mrs. George's medicine chest could furnish, and, ere long, succeeded in recalling animation to the insensible sufferer. Richmond again opened his eyes upon life, but there was no assuring light in those orbs, already blurred with the film of approaching dissolution. There, indeed, with the last dews heavy upon his brow, lay all that would soon be of the gay and fashionable man, the reckless, unprincipled schemer; there, with livid lips painfully parting, as he essayed to utter some disconnected words, reclined upon his last earthly couch the husband of a neglected wife—the deceiver of a trusting maiden. Margaret Winston moistened his mouth with a few drops of reviving cordial.

"I'll—play—no more!" An almost inaudible whisper revealed that the dying man's thoughts were upon the gaming table; then his wandering sense shifted suddenly, and he muttered—"The Jew—is old—must die;" after which darkness fell once more over Richmond's countenance—darkness which awed into silence the lookers on; all, save Margaret, who, bending over the wretched man, murmured, in a low, thrilling tone—"Charles—*Char-ley!*" The mournful tenderness with which the name was spoken last appeared to affect Richmond strangely. His quivering lips became still, his glance lost its fixedness, and, as if responding to a call, he cried—"Margery! where are you?"

Mr. Granby and Emily marvelled to behold the brightness which flashed for an instant over Margaret Winston's pale face, as, with heaving bosom and yearning look, she stooped forward, till her cheek almost touched the damp and bloody curls upon Richmond's brow. Their looks at that moment met, a gleam, apparently of full recognition, lighting over the man's ashy face, followed by an expression of bitter recollection and inward torture.

"Charles!" murmured the seamstress, clasping Richmond's hand. "Is it thus we meet—at last?"

"Ah!" gasped the dying man, "'tis Margaret—deserted Margaret!" He stared wildly upon her face, moaned bitterly, and closed his eyes once more. They feared he had relapsed into unconsciousness, but it was not so; for he started up immediately, crying loudly—"Helen—Rebecca! it is too late!"

Peyton and the physician, who stood at the back of the couch, endeavored to restrain the paroxysm; but Richmond struggled fiercely in their arms, the blood gushing from his wound, as he uttered fearful groans.

Some minutes elapsed ere excitement gave way to debility, and the sufferer's hollow words became intelligible. He was understood to ask for his tablets, which Samson soon discovered in a pocket of his coat that had been removed. Then, with feeble hand, Richmond traced a few words upon the ivory, and turning his glassy eyes upon Peyton, gasped—

"To—the—to—Mordecai Kolephat."

"That's the rich Jew," said a policeman.

"I know," said Mr. Granby. "Samson shall go at

once. You know where he resides, my boy?" The negro replied affirmatively, and proceeded to depart at once, while Peyton, stooping over his friend, said softly—

"Richmond—your wife!"

"I will go for her!" here exclaimed Emily Marvin, to whose thought the image of that unhappy wife had been presented constantly, as she regarded the dying husband. "Samson will accompany me. Ah! Mrs. Richmond might die, if too abruptly told of this."

Tears gushed from the orphan's brilliant eyes, as she spoke, and Peyton, turning towards her, thought he had never beheld such expressive female features. He had looked once before upon that countenance, while it reclined in the immobility of a swoon, and thought it beautiful indeed, but now, irradiated with the eloquence of deep feeling, it seemed well-nigh angelic in its loveliness. "Let me go with you, Miss!" he cried, involuntarily stepping forward. "I, too, am acquainted with Mrs. Richmond, and —— Nay!" he continued, interrupting himself—"*you* cannot go out in this storm! Let me be the messenger!" Emily Marvin's eyes fell beneath Peyton's glance, and her cheek burned under the tears that bedewed it; but the young man lost no time in departing on his sad mission, and the orphan, wondering at the interest in herself which his manner had seemed to manifest, turned towards Margaret Winston, who still knelt beside the dying Richmond.

Chapter XXXIII.

The Poison-Phial.

WEAK and suffering in body and mind, Mordecai Kolephat lay upon his bed, and Rebecca sat beside him, watching with strange earnestness his quivering eyelids, as they sought uncertain repose. Her own eyes were inflamed, for she had been weeping during the hours of her uncle's absence, and her cheeks were pale as the lace upon her bosom, beneath which one small hand was thrust, perhaps to still the quick beating of her heart, perhaps to feel always the tiny phial, Richmond's gift, in which sparkled those deadly drops that she had promised her lover to dispense ere morning's light. Was it fear that, as yet, restrained her hand?—that had made her falter when, with her uncle's return, the opportunity came to mingle the potion with a draught which his fevered lips had eagerly accepted? Was it irresolution, now, that caused her hesitation, as the medicine which he must soon drink stood upon a table within her reach, and with a turn of her small hand she might let fall a drop of the phial's contents—to do its work when she had gone to her chamber? Whatever it might be that checked her

purpose, Rebecca still paused—still shaded her brow with one white palm, and gazed upon the aged face of her uncle—that face which, however harsh to others, wore ever a smile for her. Often had she felt those hard lips press her orphaned brow, and linger on her lips, when, as a child, she first recalled them. The old man's countenance was now ashy pale—the lines sharp and repulsive; but, nevertheless, there was still about them the old look, remembered well, and she shuddered in meditating the deed that she must do.

Must do? Yes! for had not her promise been given to Richmond, her lover, that the lost child should not come between their love and fortune? To-night her uncle had beheld that child—where, how, she knew not; but her woman's jealousy told her that Mordecai Kolephat had gone forth with Ferret for no purpose save one, and that, whithersoever he had been led, he had looked upon the one who claimed to be his daughter. The thought was madness to Rebecca's wild nature; she closed her white teeth together, drew her hand from her bosom, clasping the poison-phial, and, rising, moved towards the table. In another moment, the deadly liquid had been conveyed to a cup of anodyne medicine of which Kolephat was accustomed to sip at intervals during a restless night, and Rebecca resumed her place beside the bed. As she did so, her uncle opened his eyes.

"My child," he said, kindly, "do not remain—retire to your room. I shall sleep very soon."

"Sleep," repeated Rebecca, mechanically echoing the old man's words—"very soon!"

"Yes, my child!—do not sit up longer. I have much to say to you, to-morrow, Rebecca—and we both need rest."

"Yes, uncle!" Rebecca answered, scarcely knowing what she uttered; for a fearful conflict was agitating her mind. She trembled violently, her face became pallid, her breath grew stifled.

"Stay, Rebecca—before you go, give me the anodyne draught," said Kolephat, not noticing the girl's excitement. "Then, my child, I'll not trouble you again."

Rebecca rose, and tottered towards the table. A fire seemed to burn in her brain—a thousand discordant sounds rang in her ears. She strove in vain to collect her thoughts—to master her emotion; only one blurred object swam before her vision—the countenance of Richmond, dark and frowning, as if chiding her delay. She clung to the table, and looked around upon the old man, who had sunk back, with closed eyes, unobservant of her excitement. His features were calm—his breast nourished no suspicion of her treachery. Rebecca could not bear to look at him, but, with a groan, sank suddenly upon her knees, her head supported by the table which she had clasped.

"Rebecca—what ails you, my child? Are you ill?"

The Hebrew's voice trembled, as he spoke, and he raised himself from the pillow. His niece recovered herself, abruptly turning, with a distorted smile, toward him.

"I was faint, uncle—for a moment!" she said.

"My child, you are wearied. Give me the anodyne, and—good-night."

Rebecca raised the poisoned cup, but in that instant

her good angel interposed to stay the accomplishment of that which she had contemplated. The luring face of Charles Richmond, that had swam before her love-sick vision with well-nigh fatal witchery, vanished for a moment from her memory, and in its place appeared alone the form of Mordecai Kolephat, her uncle, her protector, swollen and disfigured—murdered by one whom he had ever cherished. The terrible shape seemed to be outstretched between herself and the bed whereon the old man reclined—a phantom barrier to her design. She raised her hands in horror at the sight, and the poisoned anodyne fell from her relaxed fingers, the cup that held it dashed to fragments upon the carpet.

Kolephat, alarmed at the wild expression which he had marked upon Rebecca's features, was still more startled at the sudden fall of the vessel from her hands; he called upon her, feebly, stretching forth his clasp; but she replied not. Overpowered by the fierce conflict that had raged within her bosom, she sank upon the floor, exhausted. Her uncle grasped the bell-cord at his bedside, ringing long and violently, till a brace of servants appeared. In a moment afterwards, a peal sounded from the outer door-bell, announcing some visitor to the house.

"Help her!" cried the old man, as the attendants entered. "See what ails my child! Quick, Sarah!" he continued, to the woman, who had already knelt, and raised Rebecca in her arms. "Look to your mistress—she was never thus before."

The maid, assisted by her fellow-servant, lifted the young girl from the floor, discovering her pallid checks

and closed eyes. A few crimson drops stained her neck, flowing from a cut upon the white shoulder.

"Father Abraham!" exclaimed Kolephat, as he beheld this. "What blood is that?"

"Here is broken glass! She has cut herself, in falling!" said Sarah. "Poor, dear child! What could have been the matter with her? Her dress is loose!"

"Take her at once to her chamber," cried Mordecai. "I fear something serious has happened to her. Make haste, I say—make haste!"

The old man waved his hand, impatiently, and sank back, exhausted, while Sarah and her assistant prepared to bear Rebecca from her uncle's apartment to her own, which was contiguous. As they sustained her in their arms, the footman presented himself at the door, with a message for Mr. Kolephat.

"Speak! what is it!" said the Hebrew. "Who comes at this late hour?"

The servant handed Kolephat a case of ivory tablets, on a leaf of which was written, in a cramped hand—

"I am dying—it is too late! Farewell, Rebecca.

"Charles."

"What does this mean? Who sends *me* this?" asked the old man, with a wondering look. "Who is dying? who is this Charles, who" ——

He paused, for the eyes of his niece had opened and were fixed upon him, while she essayed, brokenly, to speak.

"Give me—give me!" she gasped, extending her hand towards the tablets.

"Rebecca!—my child! what means all this?" murmured Kolephat, as Sarah, in obedience to Rebecca's motions, received the ivory from his trembling grasp, and passed it to her mistress.

Perplexed and astonished, indeed, might the old man be; for strength seemed suddenly to be restored to his niece, who stood, without support, holding the tablets before her fixed eyes, while her cheek became flushed again, and her breast throbbed audibly.

"Dying!" she cried, in a hoarse whisper—"Charles dying?—too late! Oh, no!—oh, no!" She pressed the ivory to her forehead, as if to compress her thoughts, and rushed to the footman, who stood upon the threshold. "Whence came this?" she demanded, vehemently; "who brought these false tablets?"

"There is—a colored man—in the hall," stammered the servant, frightened at the unusual demeanor of his young mistress. "He said the person that sent the message was dying from a stab."

Rebecca hardly heard the last words. She had darted past the footman, and descending the broad staircase, reached the hall, where stood the negro Samson, who, to her incoherent questions, could give no reply, save the one terrible response—that Charles Richmond was, as they feared, wounded unto death.

"Take me to him! do you hear?—take me to him!" cried the wretched girl. "He must not die! I say, he shall not die!"

Samson's honest face gleamed with sympathy for the evident suffering of the impulsive creature before him, though he marvelled much as to the relationship which she could bear to the wounded man, whose wife had been summoned likewise to his dying bed. Nevertheless, to Rebecca's repeated entreaties, he replied as kindly as his feeling nature prompted—

"It is cold and stormy in the street," he said. "But he could find a carriage for the lady."

"No—I cannot wait! Let me go with you at once. Take me to Mr. Richmond!" She grasped the negro's hand, in her increasing tremor.

"Rebecca! my child!" The feeble voice of Mordecai Kolephat called to her from the head of the staircase. Already alarmed at her sudden flight, he had risen from his bed, and, supported by the footman, came painfully forth. "Rebecca!" he repeated, "in God's name, tell me what ails you this night?" He slowly descended the stairs, till he stood beside his niece.

"Do not ask me, uncle!" cried the frenzied maiden. "I must go—for they have murdered him! I tell you they have murdered him. Come!" she said, in a thrilling whisper, to Samson, "let us go at once!—at once, I say!"

It was evident that the miserable child's reason wandered; her eyes were unnaturally bright and dilated; her cheeks burned with a strange hectic. In truth, the conflict that had shaken her soul upon this fated evening —the intense alternations of temptation, horror, remorse, and fear, added to the sudden revelation of Richmond's situation—had been too violent in their action upon her

passionate temperament. Her uncle felt that her brain was now disordered, and he essayed, with gentle words, to recall her to calmness ; but she only clung with closer clasp to Samson's arm, redoubling her prayers, and silent only while, in answer to the Hebrew's inquiries, the negro briefly recounted the scene at his master's house.

"There is some strange mystery here," said Mordecai Kolephat, "for my poor child's mind is entirely distracted. Let a carriage be sent for," he continued, addressing the footman. "I cannot rest to-night, till I learn more of this."

Saying this, the Hebrew, ill and weak though he was, summoned his customary will, to overcome all obstacles, and prepared to accompany Samson and Rebecca to the house of Mr. Granby, where lay, awaiting death, the wretched man who would have been his murderer.

Chapter XXXIV.

The God-mother's Home.

MR. PELEG FERRET, shrewd as he was, and scrutinizing in the glances which he customarily cast about him, had been watched that evening by as piercing a gaze as could be levelled by a pair of bead-like eyes, which, from a dark nook of the theatre, were bent upon him and his companion. Monna Maria, the Italian, undistinguished amid other spectators of the night's performance, had recognized him as he entered, and her quick suspicion instantly conjectured the errand on which he had come. Mordecai Kolephat's person was likewise familiar to the crafty associate of Old Pris, and, as the Hebrew, with evident restlessness, regarded the earlier action of the stage, the woman, in her obscure position, traced with malicious skill the workings of his anxious mind, too plainly legible upon his features. And when, at last, the form of Ninetta darted like a sunbeam across the tawdry boards, and the loud greeting of her admirers stirred the dust from crazy walls and rotten flooring, Monna Maria leaned forward from her dark seat, and riveted her look upon the old man's countenance, while her thin lips muttered, almost audibly—"The heretic!—

he would take away the child! Accursed be his race! he shall never have Ninetta!"

The din of applause rose, at the close of the child's dance, and then Monna Maria beheld Kolephat sink into Ferret's arms, and saw him lifted by the agent behind the regardless crowd, till both disappeared from the saloon. She cared not to follow them farther, but, hastily stealing from her place, crossed to a narrow door in the wall near which she had been seated, and passing through it, entered a dim passage that penetrated behind the stage. Arrived thither, she beckoned to Ninetta, who, flushed and happy, stood, in her gauze robes, listening to the shouts of "brava!" and violent stamping of the crowd in front.

"Ninetta! come hither!—I must speak with thee!"

But Ninetta, at this moment, obeying a signal from the dwarf manager, had whirled once more upon the boards, and was pattering along the line of footlights, with twinkling steps, then pirouetting coquettishly back, tossing her radiant head, and smiling, like an infant angel, upon the boors before her, whom she, poor child, regarded as her world, the fount of honor and the reward of toil. Thus, to and fro like a fluttered bird—round and round like dancing spray of golden waterfalls—and then back to the naked, miserable slip behind the scenes, to the coarse-faced manager, the squat prompter, the iron-limbed Maestro Freidrich, and the hag Monna Maria.

"Come, *bambina!* I must take thee away! Come with me, to-night, my Ninetta."

My Ninetta! Seldom, if ever, had Monna Maria spoken thus affectionately to the child.

"To-night, Monna Maria!" she said.

"Ay, child—your maestro will leave you with me, this night. We have to talk of your great triumph, Ninetta—the *bravas*, and" ——

The little one's eyes danced with delight, and, seizing her god-mother's withered hand, she kissed it passionately.

"Ah! I'm so glad Monna is pleased!" she said, coaxingly.

"Haste, then, we must go quickly," cried the crone. Then, as Ninetta hurried into one of the wooden cells, to change her stage-finery for the plain garments that she usually wore, the Italian woman whispered to Maestro Freidrich, in a *patois* compounded of Italian and German—"They of whom I spoke were *here* to-night." She pointed, in speaking, towards the audience. "They came to rob you of Ninetta, and spoil your fortune, maestro!"

The man scowled, fixing his eyes on Monna Maria.

"They shall not have her," he answered, moodily, "unless—unless they pay me well for her services."

"Hah! thou wilt sell her, then, maestro?" demanded the hag, quickly.

"Is she not my fortune?" responded the man.

"Truly," answered Monna Maria, in a changed voice, "A great loss would it be to thee, maestro—her services."

"Ay, it must be a round sum that would satisfy me," growled the posturer. "Alsace and myself have taught her everything—eh, Monna Maria!"

"It is very true," replied the hag. "You must be paid much gold, to give her up, maestro."

"Aha! I shall see to that!" said the man, with a short laugh.

"But—to-night, Ninetta goes with me, maestro. The robbers watch her without. But *I* will keep good watch, too."

Monna Maria's shrivelled lip was distorted for an instant, in a horrible grin, disclosing her teeth, as she turned from the posturer to meet Ninetta, who now appeared, clad in her coarse cloak and heavy boots, with her theatrical wardrobe disposed in a small bundle. Taking the child's hand, the woman hastily led the way to an opening at the back of the stage, conducting to a neighboring alley. Maestro Freidrich followed, but parted from them on reaching the pavement, glad to be relieved from the charge of Ninetta, and eager to indulge in copious draughts of beer, before returning to his Alsace of Foley's Barracks. Monna Maria quickened her steps, drawing the child along the muddy streets; and they had left the theatre far behind, ere Ferret and Kolephat, penetrating to the stage, discovered, to their disappointment, that the dancing-girl was no longer there.

Through the chill mist and gusty rain the Italian and her god-daughter hurried along, tightening their shabby garments about their forms, and picking their steps over swollen gutter and shattered curbstone, till they had entered a dark alley that skirted the rear of Kolephat College. Here they diverged into a gloomy *cul-de-sac*, up which they groped their way to a contracted building, separated from the domains of Peleg Ferret by a range of filthy pens used for the stabling of horses. This narrow

building was likewise a tenant-house, but of far less capacity than the wooden church wherein a hundred families were crowded. It was four stories in height, but scarcely twelve feet from front to rear, having been erected upon a gore of land which bordered on a narrow street, forming one of the labyrinth that made up the entire neighborhood. A stranger who should, from curiosity, or by accident, penetrate in daylight to this squalid quarter, would be at a loss, indeed, to thread his way out again, through the maze of alleys, arched passages, and unpaved courts that divided the various stacks of tottering dwelling-places; but were he elevated above the roofs, and able to look down, with bird's-eye contemplation, upon the rambling fabrics of wood and brick, he would notice how, in the first place, narrow streets, after intersecting great thoroughfares of business, on opposite sides of the city, abruptly plunged downwards, crossing each other at angles in a basin or valley, over which hung constantly a cloud of smoke and fœtid exhalations; how, secondly, the narrow streets were lined with drinking-houses, dancing-cellars, policy-offices, pawnbrokers' dens, groceries, receptacles of second-hand furniture, junk-shops and stalls of those who received and trafficked in stolen goods; how, behind and in front, and at either side of these different establishments, extended alleys and lanes, two or three feet in width, that were entrances to interior dwelling-places, or tenant-houses, wherein burrowed men, women, and children, as much apart from the great civilized world of the city wherein we live as if they were below its pavements, crouching, like troglodytes, in darkness, amid

worms and rats. On one side of a narrow street, Kolephat College formed a block ; other tenant-houses stared at it from the opposite side ; behind Kolephat College were angular alleys ; skirting these alleys were the horse-pens, and at the end of the horse-pens opened the *cul-de-sac* through which Monna Maria and Ninetta stumbled in the dark, and reached the four-story brick structure, on a gore of land, and crawled up its staircase, two feet wide, till they gained a room eight feet by ten, with a closet four feet by ten, beyond, which Monna Maria called her home. Here, after lighting a piece of tallow candle, the old woman bade her god-daughter remove her cloak. Then, stooping to the fire-place, Monna Maria ignited some shavings that were packed in an earthen furnace, and placing sticks of charcoal over them, soon caused a glowing fire to disperse its heat into the confined apartment.

The Italian's quarters were, like all the dwelling-divisions in this four-story tenant-house, of most contracted dimensions ; consequently, the sixteen families who occupied the sixteen "parlors" and closets of the building had no spare room for useless furniture. A bed, if this luxury were possessed, filled up all available space in the sleeping-chamber ; a deal table, two or three chairs, and a wooden dresser, consumed the area of the living-room. Monna Maria's household articles were, therefore, very few ; but, conspicuous among them was a sort of altar, opposite the fire-place, formed of an oblong packing-box, covered with a white cloth, whereon were a crucifix and a glass bottle, containing water from the church, and over which hung several colored prints, representing the

agony of Christ, and the Virgin Mother. Here, in solitude, Monna Maria, a bigot and ascetic, was used to practise her superstitious devotions—here, in fanatical endurance, she framed new penances to undergo, new chastisements wherewith to torture her miserable body.

"Ninetta!" said the crone, extinguishing her bit of candle, as the red light of the burning charcoal cast its glare about the room. "Ninetta! sit thee beside me, and tell me if thou lovest me."

"Truly, dear Monna Maria," replied the child, seating herself upon a stool, and glancing up confidingly into the Italian's face.

"And wilt thou run away from me, and leave me forever?"

"Oh, Monna! what is that?" asked Ninetta, with a frightened look. "Do I not bring all that I have?—do I not think of my god-mother, always?" Tears glittered on the child's long eyelashes, as she uttered these words in a tone of soft reproach. Meanwhile, the old woman surveyed her earnestly.

"I know, *bambina*," she resumed, laying her tawny hand upon the radiant forehead that was turned upwards—"yes, little one! I know thou wilt prate of love; nevertheless, when they come for thee, with their gilded carriage, and prancing horses, to take thee away like a princess; and when the lackeys kneel down to tie thy shoe-strings, and bring thee fine dresses, and diamonds, and serve thy food on platters of gold and silver—ay! *bambina!* where, then, will be Monna Maria?"

Ninetta's face was clouded with perplexed wonder.

Her beautiful lips parted, and her breath was repressed, as she listened to her god-mother's words, spoken in a low tone, as if to enchant the listener's fancy by their enumeration of sensuous enjoyments.

"Monna Maria!" she murmured, clasping her small hands together—"Oh, dear Monna! who will come? who will take me away?"

"Hah! wouldst go, then, Ninetta?" cried the Italian, a malevolent expression on her face. "Wouldst go with the rich ones, who claim thee, to their grand palace, and be dressed in silks, and waited on by servants, while Monna Maria starves in the streets?"

"No, no—no!" exclaimed the dancing-girl, bursting into tears. "I would bring gold to thee, Monna Maria. The servants should wait on *thee*, and thou shouldst have the silken dresses, as well as Ninetta!"

"Curses on the silken dresses, and on the gold of heretics!" muttered Monna Maria, rising from her seat. "Listen to me, Ninetta! Thou art my god-daughter, and I promised, at the font where thou wert made a Christian, that I would guide thee in the path of our Holy Church. Thou wert then a heretic baby, a child of an accursed race that slew their God; and thou wert brought to me by a Jezebel of the tribe, to be baptized in blessed water, that the vile woman might revenge herself on one she hated. But when I answered for thee at the font, Ninetta, I swore thou shouldst live and die in the Holy Roman faith; and so I have watched over thee since, *bambina*, and kept thee in thy duty. Hast confessed this day, Ninetta?"

The child had listened, mutely, and with awe-stricken features, to the vehement revelations which Monna Maria now made, for the first time ; and when they closed with the abrupt question, she started, and trembled violently.

"Answer ! hast confessed ?"

"Surely !" replied Ninetta. "I went to Padre Clement before the play, dear Monna."

"And did he give thee absolution—tell me the truth, *bambina ?*"

"He bade me say twelve *paters* and *aves*, backward and forward, dear Monna."

"And hast thou done so ?"

"Nay, not yet ; but I will say them with thee, Monna," answered the child, in a coaxing manner, as she clasped the crone's hand. "But, first, wilt thou not tell me more about the great people ?—Oh ! be not angry, Monna Maria ! If I were rich, thou shouldst be also rich, god-mother ; and we would live in a grand house together !"

"Avaunt ! get away, Satan !" cried the woman, with a gesture of abhorrence, as though she descried the Evil One behind Ninetta's lovely form. "Tempt me not, child of perdition !" She stamped the floor, as she spoke, and glared fiercely upon her god-daughter.

"Oh ! Monna Maria ! thou wilt frighten me to death !" exclaimed Ninetta, covering her face with her hands. But the crone, mastering her passion, regained the usual impassible look, and, resuming her seat, said, calmly—

"I doubt not, *bambina*, thou wouldst have me prate long about the heretics ; but I will tell thee all in few words. There is in this great city a rich man whose child

thou art, and he searches for thee to and fro." —— The woman paused to note the effect of her words upon Ninetta, whose expressive face grew bright with joyful wonder, as she exclaimed—

"My father, dear Monna?—my real *father!*"

"Ay, he is thy father—but if thou shalt go to him, thou wilt lose heaven, and thy soul. He is a heretic, and will make thee like himself!"

"Oh, no—no!" cried the child, lifting her clasped hands. "No, dear Monna! I will save *him!* he shall not lose his *soul!* I will pray for him! I will say thousands of *paters* and *aves*, backwards and forwards! I will take him to good Padre Clement!"

"Peace, foolish one!" cried the woman's chilling voice, checking Ninetta's impassioned utterance. "He is an old man, of the doomed race who will suffer as Christ's murderers. He can but drag thee with him to perdition! I should see thy soul in torment, *bambina*, as I looked down from Abraham's bosom."

"Oh, no—no!" pleaded the child. "God is good, Padre Clement says. I would pray to God always for my father, till he sent thee to save us, dear Monna."

"Foolish child! There is no salvation from the eternal fire. Thinkest thou a heretic or his child would be admitted to Purgatory, where souls of Christians are purified? No, thou art mad, *bambina*. Say no more—where is thy rosary?"

"Here, dear Monna," answered the child, taking from her bosom a string of beads, to which a cross was appended.

"Kneel, and say thy *paters* and *aves*, and see that thy prayers are earnest!" said Monna Maria. "Pray for thy soul, and that God will keep thee in His holy faith; for to-morrow thou wilt be in thy father's mansion."

"Oh, dear Monna!" cried the child, "wilt thou, then, take me to my father? O! I bless thee, dear god-mother! I am so happy!"

Ninetta lifted her hands to the woman's withered neck, and mutely solicited a kiss. But Monna Maria did not even smile; she only said, in her measured voice—

"After thy prayers, I will kiss thee—after thy *paters* and *aves!*"

The child, thus enjoined, knelt upon the floor, beside the stool on which she had been seated, and, raising her eyes reverently, began to murmur her prayers rapidly, as she had been taught to utter them in early infancy. Beginning at the cross upon the rosary, her small fingers pattered over the string, the fall of a bead denoting the completion of each *pater* and each *ave*, till the allotted number was completed, and her penance finished. Light it was, compared with daily penances of Monna Maria; and light it well might be, in view of Ninetta's innocent mind, which, save a little thoughtless vanity, harbored no evil thought or sinful wish.

"Padre Clement gave thee full absolution?" said Monna Maria, earnestly, when her god-daughter had concluded her prayers. "I shall pray, likewise, for thee, *bambina;* and I have sharp penance to perform, this night. Eat now, if thou art hungry, and when thou art sleeping, afterwards, Monna Maria's penance must begin."

Ninetta, who had eaten nothing during the evening, partook with avidity of the dried fruit and sweetened water that her god-mother placed before her, whilst the crone refused to break her fast, which she had kept throughout the day. The dancing-girl was accustomed to this, and aware, moreover, that Monna Maria was a most rigid inflicter of various kinds of torture on herself; so that, at this time, in hearing the woman speak of penance to be undergone this night, Ninetta knew that she should hear cries and groans, ere long, and the sound, perhaps, of blows, mingled with despairing prayers.

"Now, *bambina*, to rest!" said the god-mother, lighting her bit of candle once more, and going to the narrow closet, wherein, upon tressles, was fixed a narrow framework, supporting a flock mattress. There were more prints of saints upon the walls, a wooden cross at the bed's head, and a small bottle of holy water suspended by a string near the foot. The closet itself was without window or any aperture for ventilation save the door that opened to the outer room; because the rear wall of the tenant-house, abutting against another building, admitted of no perforation to the outer air. In this respect, the building was of similar construction to thousands of other dwellings for the poor, whose infancy, childhood, and maturity, are thus choked and poisoned by malaria and disease. Little, however, did poor Ninetta, unused to other atmosphere, think of the closeness of that narrow apartment; but when, in answer to her entreaty, Monna Maria had kissed her, with cold lips, she pressed her rosary to her breast, smiled under the sprinkling of holy

water, that the crone dispensed, and then, with a soft "good night, dear Monna," turned her sweet face from the red glare that shone into the closet out of the burning charcoal in the other room.

Monna Maria closed the door of the dark room, and returning to her place near the hearth, sat for a few moments in silence, her angular elbows resting on her knees, whilst her large fingers, clinched together, sustained her repulsive head, at the same time that they clutched the cross of a rosary. In the gleam of the charcoal, her fixed eyes wore a crimson tinge; and had a stranger come suddenly upon her, in the apparent solitude, and marked her thin lips mumbling unintelligible words, her hands shifting uneasily around the chin which they held, her brow corrugating in a heavy frown, he might have looked upon her as a witch, awaiting the working of an unholy spell. Had he, moreover, been able to penetrate the hag's reveries, and to trace the chain of thought which lengthened under her long forehead, he would have shuddered to discover what wicked intents nestled, like serpents, in Monna Maria's brain—intents hurried to execution by the promptings, too, of what the wretched woman, in her bigotry, had learned to deem her duty. Always, as she peered forward into the fire-place, where arose continually gas-puffs and sparks from the charcoal brazier, the crone's fingers dropped her beads, one by one, upon the rosary string, and it was evident that the mumblings which her lips emitted were such prayers as she was used to mutter. Thus, for many minutes, she continued absorbed in strange devotion;

then, rising, began slowly to remove a thin shawl from her neck, and to uncover her shoulders and sallow breast, until she stood unclothed to the waist, standing erect, like a spectre, in the glare of the brazier. When this disrobing was accomplished, she knelt down, bowing her head almost to the floor, and resumed her mumbling prayers and self-accusations, smiting her bosom constantly, as she repeated the dismal *Confiteor* of the Romish Church. Presently, as her fanatical excitement waxed stronger, she struck her hands upon her forehead, and knotted the fingers in her disordered hair, plucking shreds of it away, and scattering them into the fire-place. More than before, she now grew like a witch, engaged in incantation, though words of prayer fell from her writhing lips.

At length, as if wearied, she ceased the beating of her breast, which had become bruised and discolored by severe blows, and remained, during a few moments, with closed eyes, half prostrate upon the rough flooring. But there was not yet to be a respite to Monna Maria's penance ; for, rising soon, and shuffling to the rude altar, she took from behind it a leather thong, of two strands, almost eighteen inches in length, and studded with bits of lead, like points of broken nails. In an instant afterwards, she had brandished this instrument of torture around her head, and it descended with cruel force across her left shoulder, and upon her naked back, leaving two narrow welts, from which small drops of blood began at once to flow. Another and another stroke succeeded, dealt with all the strength of her muscular arm—the

thongs clinging around neck and waist, and winding under her sallow breast, wounding the shrinking flesh, whilst the miserable penitent, setting her teeth together, groaned in the agony of her self-inflicted torture. Thus the dreadful flagellation was continued, until Monna Maria's back and bosom were wealed and bloody, and her arm sank, powerless to prolong its work. Then, moaning fearfully, and muttering supplications in her native tongue, the Italian woman drew her ragged garments once more over her shoulders, and resumed her seat near the hearth, where she remained silent, save in uttering groans, for several minutes.

But not yet was the bigoted woman to rest; though the mortification of her body, in her bigoted belief, had been for the behoof of the sinful soul. Not yet could she seek the slumber which exhausted vitality might seem to crave. Monna Maria's penance, though of greater violence and duration than ordinary, was of no uncommon occurrence in her solitude; for an evil conscience, wherein the memory of an ill-spent life was an ever-present horror, made bodily suffering appear of small account; nevertheless, on this night, the hag nourished purposes that, to her warped mind, seemed commanded of heaven, and yet were dark and deadly; and now, as she crouched to her chair near the furnace, her coarse garments stained with the blood that oozed from the stripes she had borne, the dim thoughts that shaped themselves in her brain took form in mutterings more distinct than had been her prayers.

"The child's soul will be lost,"—thus Monna Maria muttered—"lost forever, if she goes back to the Jew;

and the oath that I took at the font would lie upon me like a curse, and drag me with her! Ninetta, the baptized child, will become heretic and accursed, like all her kin, and I—I,"—the crone's fierce features became distorted with wrath—"I shall be spurned by the Jew and his lady daughter—I, that would save her soul from perdition."

Monna Maria rose, paused an instant, and then going to the door of the closet, opened it a few inches, and peered in. Ninetta lay upon the flock bed, in quiet sleep, her small white arm folded under her fair cheek, her clustering ringlets half concealing neck and face. She breathed heavily, though unconscious; for the dark room, with the door shut, had been close, and perhaps oppressive. Nevertheless, in happy forgetfulness, or, perchance, charmed by visions of a golden future, the child reposed as peacefully as if enclosed by palace walls; and Monna Maria, in contemplating her, could not but feel that she, her god-daughter, was surpassingly lovely.

"But what will profit her beauteous body, when the evil one claims her soul?" muttered the hag. "Better be as ugly as a blackamoor, and vile as a leper, and yet hold faith in our holy religion. Ay! she clasps the rosary now," continued Monna Maria, noting that Ninetta's fingers still held her beads, "but where will be rosary, or blessed water, or cross itself, when the Jew's black gates close on the child of perdition? No! Blessed Virgin Maria!" gasped the woman, closing the closet door, and sinking again on her knees—"she shall never go to the Jews! she shall go to thee—to thee!—this night—pure

from sin, and I will live to do penance for the sin—if sin it be to save a soul from hell !"

Thus saying, Monna Maria rose, with her customary impassible look, and proceeded, as calmly as if engaged in ordinary vocations, to make her dispositions for the commission of a fearful crime. Taking the bottle of water from her altar, she went to the dark closet again, and sprinkled the bed profusely with the sanctified element ; then placed her own crucifix at the head of the mattress, and hung a rosary at its foot. This done, with the mumbling of many prayers, while Ninetta still slumbered sweetly, the god-mother bent over her, and, lifting her hands in apparent supplication, seemed to invoke a blessing upon the act she had resolved upon, in impious superstition engendered by her bigoted faith. Then she stooped close over Ninetta, but did not kiss the child's innocent lips, perhaps apprehensive of awakening her, perhaps fearing to pollute the sinless soul so soon to leave its earthly habitation. There was a pause, then, in the hag's movements, though no hesitation. She seemed only to be concentrating her faculties to accomplish that which she was to do ; and it was even with a sterner countenance than she had before worn, that now, lifting the red furnace from the hearth, she bore it to the dark closet, and placing it near to the tressles, glanced once more at her god-daughter's face, and then, reclosing the door tightly, crept back to her chair in the dark outer room, where she remained rigid and upright, with her rosary cross pressed to her lips, her withered fingers telling the beads, her dry lips mumbling their incessant

prayers. Monna Maria knew that the pent charcoal must soon fill the closet with its fumes, and that Ninetta would die without pain, suffocated in her quiet sleep.

One by one—drop, drop—the beads rattled in falling, like the solemn tick of a watch, chronicling the lapse of time into eternity. One by one, the prayers of the fanatic—blasphemous mockery of Heaven—trembled on Monna Maria's lips. About her all was darkness, but her soul grew darker momently. Thus the minutes glided away.

"She sleeps!" thus wandered the crone, in her strange prayers; "she will pass away like a saint, and mine will be the sin to expiate by heavy penance! Holy Virgin! give me strength—blessed St. Geronimo! sustain me! all the Saints pray for me, a sinful woman! She sleeps! the child Ninetta—she will awake in Paradise! This day hath she confessed, and the Padre gave her absolution? Never will she be more fitted to die! Thus will she escape the heretic! and I—miserable—will journey to the grave alone! Holy Virgin! help me!—blessed company of saints! intercede for me. Pure Maria! receive the child's soul! Holy Innocents of Bethlehem! bear Ninetta to Paradise!"

Thus Monna Maria communed in the darkness, believing, in her superstition, that she did no wrong. O Human Heart! this poor Italian woman is not alone in her bigotry! Alas! how many of the refined, the educated, the gospel-taught are in our midst, who build up about their spirits a wall of fanaticism, like unto Monna Maria's—shutting out all charity for that which they judge to be the heresy of others, whilst, in their blind selfishness, they

make crosses of their own daily deeds, whereon they crucify the Son of Man afresh!

Many minutes crept away, and all was yet still, save the old woman's broken whispers. Monna Maria, strive against it as she might, began now to feel a nameless terror creeping around her in the darkness. Her face grew cold, and her limbs numb, and even the smart of scarified back and bosom—matted against the coarse vesture that was covered by congulating blood—seemed to be forgotten in the shivering dread that drew nigh to her heart, like unto an icy hand grasping and compressing it.

"Holy Mother of God!" ejaculated the fanatic, hugging her breast closely with her folded arms—"Blessed St. Ursula, St. Agatha, St. Monica, St. Veronica! pray for me!"

"Again she cast herself prostrate upon the floor, bowing her forehead in the dust; but at this moment, a voice from the inner room called—

"Monna Maria! god-mother! Monna Maria!" The voice was choked and gasping, and the hag knew it came from Ninetta. "Monna Maria! come! they will carry me away! They come for me!" Ay! it is the voice of the child, stifling in her sleep, thinks Monna Maria; and she gathered her arms and hands over her face, and crouched silently in the darkness.

Again came that voice, feeble in its intonation, yet modulated like music; and it said—"Monna Maria! good-night! the angels have come. I am going to my mother and the angels!" The hag grovelled on the floor, shutting her ears against the child's voice, and thus she

lay for many minutes longer ; but the voice was heard no more. "She—is—dead !" muttered Monna Maria ; "she is in heaven ! and the heretic will be cheated !" Then, painfully rising to her feet, the woman tottered through the darkness, till her hand came in contact with the closet door. All yet remained silent, and Monna Maria slowly opened the door ; but at this instant, her name was pronounced again, and, uttering a shriek, the hag sunk upon the threshold, her eyes dilated in terror, whilst the sudden rush of carbonic gas almost stifled her gasping throat.

And well might the superstitious bigot tremble at the spectacle which met her half-averted eye. Ninetta was not lying, as she expected to behold her, still and rigid upon the bed, but standing erect, seeming, as it were, ascending upwards, whilst lambent flames played around her white-robed form, and a luminous cloud enveloped her transfigured face. Her hands were raised, clasped together, and she seemed about to spring away on wings of fire, beyond the cloven roof-tree of that squalid tenant-house—above the dark and wretched world—to realms of light and never-ending beauty. Monna Maria looked, with wildered glance, then covered her eyes with her hand, and, with another cry of fear, fell prone upon the floor. Ninetta's form remained poised an instant amid the fiery smoke, and then, with a bound, descended over the god-mother's prostrate body, and sprang forward to the outer room, while the closet, no longer dark, became enveloped in thick flames, that rose from the flock bed, darted over the crackling wood-work, and licked, with curving tongue, the walls and ceiling.

Chapter XXXV.

The Fiery Trial.

WALTER DOBBS sat at his writing-table, reading from the ponderous manuscript, which he called "his book." The light of the pendant lamp illuminated his broad forehead, white hair and grotesque form, and it shone, likewise, out of the small room, into the outer apartment, around the threshold of which were gathered Walter's listeners, intent on the reader's words; for the author had, during several days past, been elaborating a chapter upon such scenes as were familiar to all of them: scenes of daily life in the great city; of people with whom they met and spoke in their common walks; of dwellers in lanes, and alleys, in cellars and garrets; of close-pent rooms, in tenant-houses, and of their demoniac surroundings, in the guise of gambling-dens, lottery-offices and groggeries, jails and chains, fevers, starvation and death. Of these usual sights and associations Walter had been writing, and was now reading to his little audience; and it is therefore, not wonderful that they heard him earnestly, for they knew too well the truth of so sad a chronicle.

Hubert Dobbs, the inventor, sat nearest to the table, which, as before, stood just within his brother's door. Hubert's countenance appeared not so troubled as formerly, and there was evidently more elasticity in his frame than could have been remarked at the period of his introduction at Mr. Jobson's office. And there was a cause, simple yet all-powerful, of the apparent improvement in the poor man's demeanor ; for now, thanks to his stranger-guest's liberality, he was free from the debts that formerly shackled him, and had made rapid progress towards the completion of a machine whereon he had expended many years of laborious research and inventive genius, but which now, as men of science declared, was to lay for him the foundation of a fortune. Beside Hubert sat his wife—no longer the wretched slave of drink—no longer with bloodshot eyes, and shaking limbs, and rent garments—but clad neatly and with scrupulous cleanliness, her hair parted smoothly back from a really handsome face, her right hand resting in that of her husband, whilst her left drew near to them the child Alice, whose intelligent features were irradiated with happiness. The woman's good resolution, attested by a solemn oath, had never been broken during three months, and she was now the comfort and supporter of Hubert Dobbs, as she had been once the weight that dragged him down to ruin.

But there were two other individuals in that little circle of auditors to Walter's book. The guest, whose timely aid had rescued his host from the power of a hard creditor, and who, nursed and tended with unremitting care by the grateful family, had completely recovered his

strength, acknowledging Walter's skill as a surgeon, as well as his power as a writer—this strange personage still remained an inmate of the dwelling, and was now as earnest in attention to the reader as were the other hearers; quite as much, indeed, as the odd-looking personage who sat beside him, ever and anon rubbing a round face, with knotted hands, as some point in the argument struck his fancy, and who was no other, in fact, than our Hibernian acquaintance, the "hedge-schoolmaster," who, having contrived to attach himself as a "handy man" to Hubert, had proved of no small use to the latter, as an assistant in his little workshop.

"The 'Tenant-House,'" thus Walter read, in a deep voice, from his manuscript, "is at the bottom of social degradation in our great cities! In vain may the legislator make laws to punish crime or coerce to virtue; in vain shall the philanthropist invent systems of amelioration; in vain shall the preacher inveigh against licentiousness among the poor; while the capitalist, rearing his cheap edifices of brick and mortar, is allowed to crowd them with human beings, debarred from the air of heaven, the light of day, the purity of nature. To extirpate the influence of the upas, we must not merely lop off its branches, but we must destroy its roots, and in the earth whence it is eradicated plant fresh and healthy seeds. The Tenant-House is a laboratory of disease, of vice, and of their kindred evils. Cleanse, remodel, purify the dwellings of Poverty, and the result will be that Thrift will displace Shiftlessness, and Industry earn bread, from lack of which Idleness becomes Crime."

"It is the *eureka* of social reform," said the guest, as Walter paused to turn a leaf of his papers.

"If the world would only believe it," remarked Hubert, sadly.

"'The world moves!'" rejoined the stranger, "even though Galileo be tortured for truth's sake! But, hark! what is that?"

A rush in the street without—a blow and clash, and the sound of men's voices, and hurrying of feet—tokens these of a fire alarm in the neighborhood—interrupted further reading of the book; and the next moment a bright glare, shining through the windows of the house, caused all to hasten to the door. A chill rain beat inward, as they opened it, and the gusty wind, entering suddenly, extinguished the light of Walter's lamp; but they noticed it not, for the alley outside was illuminated with the brightness of day, the sky above reflecting a red gleam that disclosed every object distinctly. In the narrow street, whence the small alley or court debouched, a concourse of men, women, and children were hurrying along, while the din of engine-bells, the loud burst of horns, and, above all, the measured strokes of alarm from the fire look-outs, filled the heavy air with discordant clangor.

Walter and Hubert, with their guest and the hedge-schoolmaster, hastily covered themselves, and emerged from the alley into the midst of the excited throng which poured along, and in which they were borne forward to the corner of an adjoining street, whence they obtained a view of the locality of the conflagration. The burning buildings were not yet, indeed, to be discerned, but, from

the large flakes of flame, ignited shingles, and fragments of wood that rose, volcano-like, above the tops of houses that lined the sidewalk on which they stood, they knew that the scene of destruction must comprise a mass of rotten fabrics, including several tenant-houses, which occupied an area of low land a few squares distant. At the same time, a cry arose from voices in the crowd, through which men were furiously dragging an engine, that "Kolephat College was on fire!"

Kolephat College! There was not one in the multitude of surrounding poor who did not know familiarly the miserable ruin that had long been marked by this appellation; the old wooden structure, years since a church, wherein, from corner-stone to highest string-piece, a succession of squalid inhabitants might be found, from year to year, rising, layer upon layer, up the different floors, distinguished only by degrees of squalor. There was hardly a neighbor who had not, in times past, predicted that on some occasion the besom of fire would sweep the edifice, and that its inmates would, undoubtedly, be smothered or burned, like rats in their holes. Consequently, it was more than common curiosity which prompted the people, when they heard that Kolephat College was burning, to dash forward with renewed speed; it was the strange desire to reach a spot where, perhaps, human beings were, at this moment, perishing by torture in their beds.

But if the men and women who had long dwelt in this shabby quarter were excited by the mention of "Kolephat College," so, likewise, was the guest of the brothers

Dobbs—the stranger who, three months before, had been flung down and grievously hurt by the rush of a score of men, hurling their clattering engine along the pavement. Since that night, the man had not tasted of liquor, but, like the hedge-schoolmaster and Hubert's wife, had seemed to have lost all desire for such stimulus; nevertheless, as the words "Kolephat College" rose from the people now, the guest became suddenly pale, and staggered like one intoxicated.

"My God!" he ejaculated, as Walter supported his arm—"that building contains a hundred families!"

"It is true," murmured Walter, in reply, "and only Heaven's mercy can save them from a cruel fate! for the shell and partitions are like tinder, the passages confined and crooked, the staircases steep and narrow!"

"Let us hasten thither!" cried the guest, recovering himself. "We may be able to save some lives!" Then, hurrying forward with the rest, he muttered, in a broken voice—"O Mordecai Kolephat! thy wealth is cursed! for the blood of the poor hath ever stained it!"

They soon arrived in view of the range of brick and wooden structures forming a block, at the rear of which was the burning building. A mass of people filled the street, and choked the entrance of a narrow alley, the *cul-de-sac* before mentioned as penetrating to the four-story tenant-house into which Monna Maria had conducted her god-daughter Ninetta. The fire at this time appeared to be confined to the back portions of this building, from the roof of which flames and fiery splinters were borne upward like the blaze of a blasting furnace From the

second floor of that narrow house—from the dark closet wherein the Italian bigot sought to smother an innocent child—the flames had worked upward through dry panels, till they reached the story above, and thence communicated with a wooden structure in the rear.

But the spectators thought not, at this moment, of ascertaining the origin of the disaster which now threatened to spread widely through the stacks of frame dwellings, horse-stables, and workshops, that were huddled within the limits of a few squares. The firemen shouted loudly, as they endeavored to bring their engines nearer to the blazing building, but were prevented by narrow, impassable alleys, and were then obliged to draw out great lengths of hose, carrying them over sheds, and through passage-ways, till they might attain a position whence water could be cast upon the flames. Cries of alarm rose continually from the crowd, as they seemed to catch the shrieks of tenants within the building, unable to escape ; but, save the broken limbs of a poor woman who had plunged headlong down the staircase, in a wild effort to descend, no accident had as yet been witnessed. Sufficient notice, it appeared, had providentially been received by the inmates of the house, so that they had all reached the street in safety, with some fragments of their scanty furniture, which were now scattered upon the wet sidewalk, their owners shivering beside them, as they watched the ruin of their only shelter.

All !—not so ; for, suddenly, a tumult rose among the people—a great shout was heard, and then the voices of men and women, calling to each other, in frightened

tones—"Look! look! there is a child! a child at the window! She will be lost! the fire is all around her!"

Walter and Hubert Dobbs, with their two companions, stood at the extremity of the range of horse-sheds that formed an angle with the four-story building. They had entered through the *cul-de-sac*, and reached nearly to the spot where a fireman stood, with pipe in hand, preparing to direct the first stream of water upon the flame, that had now crept along the eaves of the brick house, and was lapping downward, whilst, in the rear, it had spread fiercely through the roof and upper stories of a stack of tottering frames. Kolephat College was not, as had been reported, yet on fire, but it was evident that, if not arrested, the sparks and cinders must be carried by the strong wind across the narrow lane which intervened, and settling upon the tinder-like roofing of the old church, soon wrap it with the devouring element. All speculation upon this or other contingencies was banished by the new spectacle that was visible in the third story, below which the red tongues of fire came darting incessantly. It was the figure of Ninetta, the dancing-girl, who, garbed in her white night-clothes, as she had sprung from the dark closet that had nearly been her tomb, now appeared at an open window, her beautiful face emerging, pale as marble, but radiant in the surrounding light, her white arms stretched outward, imploring succor from the crowd below.

"A ladder! a rope!—a ladder!" were the confused exclamations of the nearest spectators, as they beheld the child's jeopardy; and a rush was made outward from the

cul-de-sac, as if to procure the means of escape. But the next instant a voice cried—"No ladder can be taken through this crooked alley! The house must be entered!" It was the fireman holding the water-pipe, who saw at a glance that the use of ladders was impracticable in so confined a space. At the same instant, the gallant man placed the pipe in the hands of a comrade, and, darting forward, disappeared within the narrow doorway of the tenant-house. The people, meanwhile, raised their shouts anew, calling to the child at the window to run from the apartment where she was, and seek safety by the staircase. But she, poor trembler, was bewildered by terror; for she had lain fainting, where she had fallen upon the floor of the room, during several moments after her escape from suffocation, until the rapid progress of the fire had completely cut off all avenues of egress save the solitary window. The flame, communicated by the charcoal furnace to the flock bed, had burned up through a low ceiling, and out along a thin panelled wall to the passage-way, thence, augmented by the draught, devouring the dry woodwork of the staircase, and emitting volumes of thick smoke and lurid sparks, which were hurled throughout the rest of the houses. The flooring behind the window-sill to which Ninetta clung in despair, was crisping under the heat, and had long since given way, but that the fire, ascending in the closet, and there confined by the closing of the door, had first worked its path above, before spreading to the outer room.

In this state of things, there was no opportunity for the child to obey the hoarse directions of the excited crowd

below. She could only wave her little arms, and raise them beseechingly above her head, as she leaned further out of the window, shrinking from the heat within, which scorched her flesh, and from the smoke that grew close and deadly. The spectators shuddered now, for they could catch glimpses of forked gleams behind Ninetta's white form; and, presently, they beheld the brave fireman, who had entered the tenant-house, appear at a window in the second story, and dash out the sash, gasping for breath, while his voice, choked and harsh, scarcely reached their ears. "The house within is a sheet of flame!" he cried; and swinging himself out of the casement, let himself down a dozen feet into the street.

Then, indeed, cries of terror from the men, and wailings from the women, rose in dire discord from the multitude, as their faces were turned upwards to the high third-story window, where clung the beautiful child, at the mouth of the fiery furnace, into which, it was too probable, she must shortly fall backwards, or, springing outward, be dashed upon the stony pavement. Then a loud demand was made for bedding, to strew upon the gutter, or hold above the people's heads, whereon the girl might fall, and be saved from death, even with mutilation. A score of men rushed outward, as this call was heard, to procure, if possible, beds and mattresses; but in the meantime, a new horror was added to the scene.

It has been said that a row of sheds, used for the stabling of horses, diverged at an angle from the brick tenant-house. The roofing of these dilapidated structures had received, during several minutes, a shower of cinders,

thrown upward from the burning building, and at length broke out into a blaze, which rapidly extended to the rotten walls. The animals within, tethered to the stalls, had become frantic with the glare around them, and now, breaking their halters, were plunging madly to and fro, uttering frightful shrieks. They dashed at the burning doors, the frail fastenings of which at once gave way, permitting the infuriated brutes to rush outward upon the alley; and now, just at the instant when the shout went up for beds, to break the child's fall, the people in the *cul-de-sac* beheld a dozen steeds plunging upon them, with dilated nostrils, and manes tossed aloft, their throats venting horrible sounds like the roar of wild beasts in the jungles. On came the terror-stricken animals, and the multitude made way before them, thinking no longer of the doomed child in the flames, as they cast themselves out of the *cul-de-sac*, or crowded to the wooden buildings at its sides, uttering, the while, the most fearful cries, which mingled horribly with the din of the tramping horses.

But all did not fly thus, or Ninetta's last moment had surely come. Hardly had the exhausted fireman reached once more the street, after his vain effort to penetrate to the third story, than a dark figure sprang from a foremost group in the alley, and gaining the base of the tenant-house, clasped a metal conduit, which served for the sewer connection of the building, and unto which was joined, at the height of the second story, a spout of weaker material, slightly fastened to the brickwork by iron hooks. Clinging to this frail support, with both

hands, and bending his knees across it likewise, the man began slowly to climb, while the spout shook and rattled at every foot of his ascent. At this instant came the alarm from the horse-sheds, and the rush which followed it; and, save by a few who watched with straining eyes, from a corner where they had retreated, the daring climber was unnoticed by the crowd, till the scattering animals had broken far away, and the multitude bore back into the *cul-de-sac*. Then the dark figure was seen close to the casing of the window, which one hand grasped while the other lifted the child Ninetta from the floor within, and supported her slight form in the air without. At this sight, a shout arose that seemed like a prolonged peal of thunder, and a hundred rude expressions of admiration broke from the overwrought bosoms of the multitude below. Then all was hushed, as the climber was observed to wave his hand, and cast downward a strand of rigger's yarn, which began slowly to unwind from the ball within his palm, and descend towards the pavement.

"A rope! a rope!—he wants a rope!" was passed from mouth to mouth; and ere the string could reach the ground, a heavy cord was hastily cut from an engine in the narrow street, at the mouth of the alley, dragged into the *cul-de-sac*, and affixed to the strand of yarn. In a little space longer, which seemed an hour to the breathless spectators, the rope was drawn upward, fastened securely to the window-frame, and then, amidst the deafening plaudits of the crowd, the intrepid climber lowered himself to the pavement, and staggered with his insensi-

ble burthen into the arms of the brothers Dobbs, who rushed forward to support him. It was their guest, and he had saved the life of Ninetta.

Slowly, and almost reverentially, the people fell back, silently permitting the little one, whose white night-dress was all scorched, and discolored with smoke, to be borne from the *cul-de-sac*, and the alley into which it opened, outward to the street, that was now densely packed with men and women. Behind them crackled and roared the increasing flames, on which now the engines began to hurl their volumes of water ; but the people forgot for a time the raging element, as they pressed behind the human being who had been rescued from the fiery abyss. Thus, solemnly as it were, though with great shouts, the brothers and their friend, assisted by the hedge-schoolmaster, worked their way through the multitude, until the broader pavement was gained, the misty rain descending all the while upon Ninetta's upturned face, so still and white, like marble. Arrived there, the little group were brought to a pause ; for a carriage, attempting to pass through the street, had become jammed in the crowd, the horses attached to it stamping and plunging, affrighted by the lurid glare across their path. The door of this carriage was open and an old man's face peered anxiously out—the face of Mordecai Kolephat.

At this crisis, and as the people pressed around the brothers and their friend, a new flash of the spreading flames cast its awful radiance over the scene, illumining the curious faces of the spectators, and disclosing, in all her sweet loveliness, the form of Ninetta sustained by

Walter and Hubert, her head, with the face upward, resting upon the arm of their guest. Mordecai Kolephat's glance fell upon that childish face, which he had last beheld that night so full of life and animation ; as he heard the shouts of the multitude, he saw that some strange emotion pervaded them all ; then, uttering a loud cry, he sprang from the carriage, and in a moment had clasped the insensible girl to his bosom. The people swayed backward, as they beheld the old man clasp the little one, and heard his lips murmur—"My child ! my child !" They heeded his imploring looks, as he raised his head, and gazed upon Ninetta's features ; and the brothers who supported her, yielding to one whom they supposed to be a relative, obeyed the Hebrew's low request that she should be placed within the carriage. In a moment more, Ninetta the dancing-girl reposed upon the cushions, her head resting on the lap of Rebecca—that wretched Rebecca who, at the bidding of her lover, had meditated in the past hour a great crime, in order that her uncle's lost child should come no more between her love and fortune. Was it, indeed, retribution that had now brought this little one to her arms, to hold close to her breast, while the carriage pressed slowly through the crowded street? Was it justice that had brought this young face so near to her, lying white and beautiful upon her lap—immobile, too, like death, beneath the fiery glare that fell athwart them ?

Slowly the carriage passed through the multitude ; and behind it walked the brothers Walter and Hubert, and the hedge-schoolmaster, followed by their guest. The

latter spoke no word, though he had recovered from his exertion; he replied not to the admiring shouts that greeted him, as eager fingers pointed him out; he only kept close to the coach, his eyes dwelling upon the inmates, with a fixed regard—upon Mordecai Kolephat, and Rebecca, and the fainting Ninetta.

Meantime, the fire raged fiercely; for the delay caused by the difficulty of bringing the hooks or ladders near, and the subsequent pause which ended in Ninetta's rescue, had given it great headway; so that not only was the brick tenant-house wrapped in a sheet of flame, but the roofs of a dozen miserable buildings extending to the frail walls of Kolephat College were likewise ignited, and shot forth clouds of smoke, mixed with crackling sparks. The firemen strove in vain to gain positions whence they could command the conflagration. Wheresoever they sought to penetrate or scale, they encountered the same obstacles, of narrow alleys, steep stairs, intricate passages, and walls of such slight material that it was a mockery of danger to seek to surmount them. Thus, in spite of arduous labor and exposure, on the part of the untiring men, the entire block, including Kolephat College, was soon involved in equal ruin. Kolephat College, indeed, was like a magazine, wherein a spark falls to enkindle at once its combustible stores, and hurl them all suddenly to nothingness; for no sooner had the fiery element reached its dilapidated eaves, its shattered walls, and inflammable partitions, than a besom of destruction seemed to sweep from floor to floor, driving the hapless tenants, young and old, sick or suffering, or nigh unto death, to flee, as best they might,

along the wooden passages and down through cramped stairways, until they reached the dismal outer air, and were lost in the shouting crowd that stared upon their desolate rooftrees.

Old Mallory—who had been the miserable miser, but was now the proud protector of Fanny, whose sweet voice chased away shadows from his pillow, and whose smile made sunshine in every nook of his room—Old Mallory, that afternoon, had celebrated his grand-daughter's birthday, treating the children of Margaret's tenant-house school to a little feast of cates and bonbons, to purchase which he had expended a trifle of his hoarded wealth. In Fanny's name had been regaled a dozen eager urchins, who flocked to enjoy the unusual luxury; and in Fanny's name, also, had been presented to the neglected ones some article of clothing suited to the needs of each. Fanny had been the queen of the festival, her clear eyes brimming with joyous tears, her face radiant with love. Thus the evening had drawn on; and when the school-children went to their homes, Fanny, and Rob Morrison, and Harry Winston, and poor Moll, the orphan child, remained with Mallory, whilst Margaret and Emily Marvin went out to visit, for a few hours, their friend and benefactor, Mr. Granby—there to become participants, not only in the quiet family devotions that made the Samaritan's household so pleasant, but, alas! to mingle in the scenes of suffering and sorrow which had followed so abruptly on their first peaceful communion.

Meanwhile, Mallory and the children passed the hours in innocent enjoyment. Fanny, with grave gentleness,

essayed to fill the place of Margaret Winston, marshalling her young friends, and even the old man, as scholars in her mimic school. Never had the grandfather before experienced that tranquil happiness which springs from doing good ; yet, never before had he felt so deeply in his withered bosom the terrific blankness of his past existence—the desert desolation of the path which he had traversed.

Thus was gathered together the little circle, absorbed in buoyant pastime, when the rush and clash of people on the staircases of Kolephat College, the cries of women flying for their lives, and a sudden glare around the building, startled the children from their sport, with the fearful knowledge that the tenant-house was on fire. Mallory, weak and paralytic, hobbled to the door, clasping the child Fanny by her hand, whilst Bob the Weasel took firm hold of Harry and the orphan Moll. Then, with panic-stricken haste, they all hurried from the apartment, to thread the dark passages and descend the steep stairways.

Many other tenants, roused from the various floors of Kolephat College, had reached the passage which Mallory and the children sought, and were crowding together at the head of the staircase. Then, women and children, half clothed, and many with naked feet, found themselves at once, in the impervious darkness, jostling one another, and trampled and kicked in their eager attempt to escape. Cries of pain, oaths, and maledictions, and plaintive appeals for pity, sounded throughout the undistinguishable throng which struggled and fought for precedence in that

unlighted passage, and at the well-like mouth of the staircase, whence descended, ladder-like, to the lower floors, a declivity of rotten, dilapidated steps. "Oh! my child!" cried Mallory, drawing Fanny nearer to him in the press, "we shall be crushed to death! the poor people are mad with fright."

"Rob, dear Rob! where are you?" murmured Fanny, in the darkness, as she clung to the old man's weak arm.

"Here I am, sister—me and Harry, and Moll," cried the brave Weasel, who had succeeded in creeping onward, and was now jammed among those who were foremost on the stairs. Rob's voice was faint, for his breath had been nearly squeezed from his body, but he spoke hopefully, and took a closer grip of Harry and Moll. Scarcely had he spoken, however, when a new rush of other fugitives from the upper stories took place, and the three children were borne downward in the press, clinging tenaciously to each other, and supported on their feet by the compactness of the mass behind and before them. Mallory was forced downward also, his weak limbs yielding instantly; but at the moment when he felt himself lowered, as it were, upon the crowd below, the little hand which clasped his own became loosened, and a cry of pain from Fanny told him that she was lost from his grasp.

"Oh! grandpa!" the child's almost stifled voice was heard to murmur; and then, as if with a last effort, it cried—"Rob! dear Rob!" But Rob was far below, dragged helplessly in the desperate rush; and Mallory, after a brief struggle to return to his grand-daughter, was hurled likewise downward in the darkness, amid

shrieks, prayers, groans, and curses, that were horrible to hear.

At length, however, the wretched tenants, fighting for life and the lives of their poor children, succeeded in reaching the lower floor, and emerged into the outer glare, to behold the crowded street, and feel a misty rain dashing in their faces, with reviving coolness. Some were hurt severely, having been stamped upon and beaten in the wild scramble for egress; some fainted outright, on reaching the air; others sank down in gutters, conscious, but without power to move farther.

Rob Morrison, in all the tumult and conflict, had never released his hold of his companions, and this had saved the three from being prostrated and trampled upon on the stairs. The Weasel's new coat, the gift of Mr. Granby, was rent from his shoulders, and the frocks of Harry and Moll had been torn in tatters; but they were safe, and ran, with eager faces, to meet old Mallory, who shortly tottered forth, bruised and feeble. But where was little Fanny?

Ay! where was Fanny? The child came not with the last fugitives; her voice had not been heard since that terrible moment when her hand was wrested from that of her grandfather. Where, indeed, was Fanny?

Mallory clasped his shrivelled hands, and stood a moment, in the lurid light of the sky, an image of desolate fear. His features were ghastly, his hair hung disordered, and he stared back, with glassy eyes, into the dark entry of Kolephat College, as if he gazed, horror-stricken, into an open grave. Then a light gleamed on his features, he

uttered a hollow groan—it might be a prayer—and tottered back to the building, retracing his steps in the darkness.

Rob Morrison, brave-hearted boy, hesitated a moment, and half advanced to follow the old man; but Harry Winston, frightened at the increasing flames, and fierce din about them, clung fast to his hand, and the orphan Moll had sunk exhausted on the curbstone. The Weasel hurriedly supported both, leading them to the shelter of a porch, at the mouth of the court, and then, bidding them clasp each other's hands, and stir not a step till he should return, ran swiftly back to the door of Kolephat College, following Mallory's path to the dark staircase. But he had not to ascend them; for Heaven, in its mercy, had already saved his sweet Fanny from her deadly peril. A strange man appeared emerging from the gloom, holding the fair child in his arms; and the glad Weasel knew that she was alive and without hurt, for her dove-like eyes opened to greet him, and she murmured gently—"Rob—dear Rob!" Mallory came behind, his form bowed and weak, but his face radiant with joy. He clasped the boy's hand in silence, and Rob led the way to the porch where waited Harry and Moll. There the strange man deposited his burthen, and turning his face to the glare of the sky, disclosed the haggard features of the drunkard Keeley.

"Mallory! do you know me?" he cried, in a choked voice.

"God pardon my sins!" cried the old man. "Is it you, Keeley?"

"I robbed ye of your goold," exclaimed the man;

"an' it's a heavy curse it's been to me! Will ye forgive me, Mallory, for I've not long to live?"

"May God forgive my sins only as I freely forgive you, Keeley!" answered the old man, solemnly. "Here is your child, Keeley—and blessin's on your hand that saved mine!"

The drunkard, now sober and sorrowing, clasped his orphaned daughter to his breast; and then, unbuttoning his ragged coat, drew out a white cloth containing some heavy substance.

"I watched ye to-day, Mallory," he said, "when ye played with the children! Unbeknownst to ye, I saw ye kiss poor Moll, here! An' when ye tried to run from the house yonder, and your child was dragged away an' almost smothered in the passage, I saved her from the feet that was tramping her. Then, Mallory, I took her back to your room—the room where I robbed ye—and now—look there, Mallory!" He threw the cloth bundle that he held at the old man's feet, and the metallic ring which followed showed that it contained coin. "It's your money, Mallory! I robbed ye when the liquor was in me, but—I've saved your treasures, to-night, for the sake of the kiss you gave poor motherless Moll!"

Chapter XXXVI.

Unravelment.

CHARLES RICHMOND was, indeed, dying; and hardly could one of his companions of the gaming-house have recognized in the glazed, despairing eye, and sallow, haggard cheek, the features of him who had been the gay and elegant "man of the world." His livid forehead was damp with the last dews; and, as he sat, propped by the pillows of the couch, it might have seemed to a sudden spectator that he was at the close of a long and cruel sickness. His hand was clasped in that of a woman, who had thrown herself upon her knees beside the sofa, and with agonized look was gazing into his face. His lips opened, as if with pain, and he struggled for utterance.

"Helen!—will—you—for—give?"

"O Charles! dear love! dear Charles! you will not leave me?"

"You will—not—hate—my memory, Hel—en," gasped the stricken man. "I—have in—jured you—deeply!"

"No, no! my husband! you have been kind! you were" ——

The poor wife sobbed, and bowed her head upon the

pillows. All thought of Richmond's delinquencies—of his neglect—his abuse—was banished from her recollection. She only saw, lying in his blood before her, the man to whom she had plighted troth so few years ago—whom she had cherished since, with a true wife's unswerving affection.

"Helen!" resumed Richmond, collecting, with an evident effort, his small remaining strength, and speaking in a low but fearfully distinct accent—"I am going away, and all is dark before me! I have no more to do with mortal things. But, I have been cruel—to you, Helen—and" —— He paused, and, breathing heavily, pronounced the name of "Margaret;" and the seamstress, who was kneeling near to the couch, a little way from Helen, softly approached him. "Margaret!" he repeated, "I wronged you—in your youth—but I am punished now." The seamstress remained silent; and Helen, with a strange terror creeping about her heart, looked wonderingly into her face.

"Helen!" went on her husband, "look upon Margaret, whom I deserted, that I might wed with you, and who murmured not at my treachery. My wife! my wife!" he repeated—"Promise me that—you—will protect poor Margaret!"

Helen Richmond's sad eyes had rested on the pale, thoughtful countenance of the seamstress. She saw the traces of long and silent suffering; she marked the mild light of those gentle eyes; and she recalled suddenly that dreadful memory when, in her husband's apartment, she had found a letter, stained with tears, and signed by the

name "Margaret." In a moment, her perception had mastered the entire mystery; her woman's instinct traversed the past of this deserted one—a past enveloped in loneliness and tears. She took Margaret's hand, very quietly, and laid it beside that of Charles Richmond, clasping them both with her own. "I will protect Margaret!" she murmured, in a broken voice. "Oh! will Margaret comfort *me*?"

The wife and the deserted one bowed together beside the dying man; their tears mingled, their sobs answered to one another.

"Helen!—Margaret!—will you forgive me?" gasped Richmond, whose senses began once more to wander.

"Oh, Charles! I love you better than my life. I cannot let you die!" murmured Helen, wildly. Richmond sank back, his lips fluttered, and his eyes closed.

"O Heaven help me! he is—he is" —— The wife trembled and moaned, but could utter no more. The physician drew near, and placing his hand on Richmond's breast, said—

"It beats still."

"Oh!" suddenly shrieked the dying man, starting upward, with a wild look, made terrible by the blood which gushed at once from his mouth. "Rebecca Kolephat!—it is too late! Beware, Rebecca! let the old man live!" His eyes became fixed, as if regarding some ghastly vision; he motioned with his hand, making a gesture as of warning. "Rebecca!" he cried, more loudly—"Rebecca!"

As that name rang through the room, the group which surrounded the couch, made way before a female form,

that suddenly entered by the opening door. It was Rebecca herself, who, bounding forward, caught the fixed eye and pallid face of Richmond, and sank, like one dead, upon the carpet. Richmond beheld her with a vacant glance, that was but half recognition, but the apparition had turned the current of his fancies, and he sank backward silently upon the pillow. Helen supported his head, and Margaret wiped the bloody froth from his lips. In a moment afterwards, the physician placed his hand upon his breast, and said—

"It does not beat!—he is departed."

Thus died Charles Richmond, in the presence of his deserted wife and the woman whom he had deserted in his youth; whilst the unhapy object of his latest treachery lay in a deathly swoon upon the floor beside him. And this was the end of his scheming and heartlessness.

All remained still for a space within that place of death. Mrs. George entered noiselessly, and spoke a few words to Mr. Granby, who followed her to the library. Samson was there, and beside him an old gentleman, whom the master greeted as Mr. Kolephat. He silently returned Mr. Granby's salutation, but without removing his anxious gaze from a form which reposed in the large arm-chair. It was Ninetta, still insensible. Mrs. George hurriedly gathered her restoratives, applying them, in rapid succession, to the fainting child; but long and fruitless were her efforts to revive suspended animation. At last, the physician, summoned from the outer room, where his services were, alas! no longer needed, decided to open a vein—an operation that, in a little while, induced the

flow of life's current through the little one's frame. Her dark eyes soon opened, and her lips moved in faint murmurs.

"Monna Maria!" she articulated, "the fire will burn us! Monna Maria! let us escape! let us fly!"

Alas! the poor child was dwelling upon that fearful prison of fire from which she had been rescued; and the thought of her wretched god-mother's safety was mingled with the thought of her own. But Monna Maria—bigot and fanatic—had found no guardian angel in the moment of her peril; and no human hand had interposed to save her from the doom she had invoked for another.

Tears fell from Mordecai Kolephat's eyes—the first tears that had watered his heart during years of lonely misery. The drops fell upon Ninetta's brow, and she looked up wonderingly. The revelation of Monna Maria suddenly stole across her memory, and she murmured, in a simple, childish way—"Are you my father?"

The Hebrew bowed himself, with a low moan, and clasped the child in his arms. He spoke no word, but held Ninetta in that close embrace, as a mother would clasp her new-born babe. Memories of the past were busy in the old man's bosom—"God is good to me!" he murmured. "God is good to me!" Then, releasing his hold of Ninetta, he laid her gently back in the arm-chair, and knelt, gazing upon her face. As he did so, a hand was laid upon his arm, and turning, he started, and uttered a feeble cry. A dark-featured man, of middle age, stood behind him, and looked steadfastly into his eyes.

"Almighty Father!" ejaculated the Hebrew, raising his eyes upward, and then letting them fall once more upon the other man, with a wondering look, while his hands were unconsciously outstretched.

"Speak! who are you?"

"I am he who saved this child from the flames!" returned the stranger, who was no other than the guest of Dobbs the inventor.

"And you are" ——

"I am—I was—your son!"

"God is merciful!" cried the Hebrew, extending his arms, and clasping the stranger to his heart. "My boy! my boy! whom I drove forth, with my curse! Is it, indeed, thou who art returned to mine age?"

"Father! I sinned against your will; but my offence was in loving one who was worthy of all love!"

"And she—your wife, Samuel?"

"She is in heaven!" answered the son, with a deep sigh.

"O Samuel! my boy! I have sinned against heaven!" cried Mordecai Kolephat. "But, with the help of Almighty God, my life shall yet atone for all. My poor boy!" he continued, holding his son's hand, whilst he clasped Ninetta to his side—"God is good to me—a sinner! In an hour He has restored my daughter, by the hands of my long-lost son!"

The negro Samson, who had looked on silently during the affecting scene, now turned his shining eyes towards his master. Mr. Granby seemed to understand the expression which was in them, for he knelt at once in the midst of that group, and said in an earnest voice—

"Let us pray!"

And the prayer arose! for the departed who lay amid mourners in one apartment—for the living and restored, who were clasped to happy hearts, in the other! It was a simple, but impressive prayer, touching upon the confines of life and death—mingling supplication with thanksgiving—a prayer such as might ascend from every lip, could all the inscrutable purposes of Divine Providence, in all their beautiful symmetry, be made as clear unto human comprehension as were the scenes of sorrow and of joy blent together that night in Mr. Granby's house.

Ere the prayer was ended, other ears listened to its tender lessons. Helen Richmond came in, sorrowing but resigned—her cheek bowed upon the breast of Margaret Winston. Emily Marvin followed, led by Harry Peyton, who, as he clasped her hand, looked upon her beautiful face, and dreamed, for the first time since he had lost Helen Ellwood, of love and, perchance, happiness yet in store for him. And, as he stood beside the young girl, and heard, with her, the words of Christian prayer, there were softness and moisture in his heart, and the good seed fell quietly into it, displacing the tares that had been sown in his worldly past.

As Mr. Granby rose from his knees, at the close of his devotion, and while the broken "Amen!" yet trembled on Samson's lips, a new group was added to the circle. A tottering step was heard upon the threshold, and the murmur of childish voices. Mr. Granby turned, and saw the old man Mallory, holding little Fanny by the hand, while Rob Morrison and Harry Winston pressed forward

together. Behind was a figure blackened with smoke—with garments scorched and tattered. His singed hair straggled back from his charred forehead, and he seemed to shrink from observation. Clasping this man's hand, was a little child. Mr. Granby looked inquiringly at Mallory, who, led forward by Fanny, essayed to speak; but his voice was choked by emotion.

"Please, sir," said Bob the Weasel, "there ain't no more Kolephat College."

"What do you mean, Robert?"

"Kolephat College is burnt down, sir!—but Fanny's saved—Fanny's all safe!"

Kolephat College was, indeed, no more! But its owner, richer than ever, clasped to his bosom his recovered children, and murmured—

"My dead one alive again!—my lost one found!"

Charles Richmond had passed away! But the hearts he had wronged, now soothed and made holy in suffering, were drawn near to each other in a kindred of tender memories. Helen and Margaret became friends, mingling their prayers, their tears, and their good works, in a life of charity to others.

The spendthrift, Henry Peyton, will borrow no more money from the Jobsons and other speculators on the luxuries or necessities of others; for he has become rich again, by an uncle's will, and is withal a wiser and a hap-

pier man, and will be yet happier when Emily Marvin, the poor widow's orphan, shall lay her hand in his, and call him "husband!" So says good Mrs. Dumsey, whose favorite Peyton is, and who avers that she knew, from the first, they were "made for one another, as sure as two peas is in a pod."

There is one who, though apparently less happy than others of our story, thanks Heaven, by day and by night, that she was prevented from committing a great crime. Her passionate nature has been subdued; she looks back upon her love-dream, as upon a dark shadow; and she kisses Ninetta, the Hebrew's daughter, when the child is sleeping, dropping tears upon her fair brow. But Rebecca keeps her fearful secret, and prays to be forgiven.

It was but a few months after the burning of Kolephat College that a wretched youth was arrested for mortally wounding a comrade in an affray. He had been an undertaker's apprentice, but previously one of those outcast children that swarm about tenant-houses, growing up adepts in vice and crime. He was condemned and executed, and confessed, under the gallows, to the murder of Charles Richmond.

The restored son of Mordecai Kolephat, who had fled, years before, from his father's malediction, and, after long sojourn in a foreign clime, had buried his wife, and returned desolate to his native land—there to become, bruised and bleeding, the guest of Hubert Dobbs—had

not listened to "Walter's Book" without imbibing the spirit of its philosophy. Henceforth, in wielding the revenues of his millionaire father, he knew how to provide for Poverty's wants, and to consider Poverty's sorrows.

"Kolephat College is destroyed," said he to Walter, "but upon its ashes shall arise a house that will be fit for human beings to enter—a habitation and a HOME for tenants!"

"There ought to be a Tenant-House School-room in it!" said Rob Morrison; and Mr. Granby replied—

"Yes! for the tenant-house children are still to be fed and taught."

And upon the ruins of Kolephat College, the foundations of a Model Dwelling for the Poor have been already laid. In this new Tenant-House there are to be allowed no damp and dark cellars; no confined passage-ways; no steep staircases; no gloomy, unventilated bedrooms; no inflammable partitions; no crowding together of hundreds in an area scarce capable of accommodating scores. Near this new dwelling, the poison-dealing grocery will not be revived; nor the unlawful office of a policy dealer be permitted to approach; nor the triple balls swing in luring temptation of poverty. But children's voices in play, and in singing, and in praise to God; and the plash of cool water from the hydrants; and the chime of a church-bell shall be heard by contented Industry. Neither Ferret nor Jobson shall draw nigh; but the owners will behold their tenants, face to face, and landlord and tenant shall be happier in mutual confidence and respect.

Thus ends the chronicle of the Tenant-House; haply to be read by thoughtful men and women; perhaps to stir the Human Heart of society, in at least a little degree, so that it may beat in sympathy with virtuous poverty, struggling amid the darkness of its low estate.

O Human Heart! O Christian Soul! the little book goes humbly but prayerfully forth to you.

THE END.

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